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A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF HAMLIN GARLAND FROM 1860 TO 1895

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DISSERTATION

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"What, then, is amiss with our writers? They are victims of the universal taboo which the ideal of material success, of the acquisitive life, has placed upon experience. It matters not at all that they have no part or lot in this ideal, that they are men of the finest artistic conscience. In the first place, from their earliest childhood they are taught to repress everything that conflicts with the material welfare of their environment; in the second place, their environment is itself denatured, so stripped of everything that might nourish the imagination, that they do not so much mature at all as externalize themselves in a world of externalities. Unable to achieve a sufficiently active consciousness of themselves to return upon their environment and overthrow it and dissolve it and recreate it in the terms of a personal vision, they gradually come to accept it on its own terms."

-- Van Wyck Brooks, Letters and Leadership, New York, 1918, 41.

"The man, whether called poet, painter, or king, is of his age, hopelessly imbedded in it. His imagination cannot escape the restrictions of time and space and surroundings."

-- Hamlin Garland, MS. lecture, "The Present and the Future," 1886 (Appendix B of this Dissertation.)

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Much of the literary material used in this dissertation is as yet unpublished. The reader is reminded of the legal complications likely to arise from any use of these letters and documents for purposes of publication without first obtaining written permission. Applications for such permission should be sent to the writer of this study, Mr. Eldon C. Hill, whose address may be had from the Department of English, The Ohio State University. He will be glad to consult with the Garland family or with the other owners of the materials, including himself, with reference to the right of publication.



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## PREFACE

Mr. Lewis Mumford has made an appeal for an increase of attention to our cultural heritage from the years between 1865 and 1895. "There is a danger," he insists, "that both the works and days of the principal figures of this period will vanish before either has been properly evaluated or assimilated. This would be a grave gap in the story of American culture, and a real loss. If these artists and poets and thinkers are imperfectly remembered, our own generation may pride itself a little more completely on its 'uniqueness'; but it will lose the sense of solidity that a continuous tradition, actively passed on from master to pupil or disciple supplies."<sup>1</sup>

If we assume that Hamlin Garland is a representative figure of the last decades of the nineteenth century, he might yet seem to be an exception to Mr. Mumford's plea. On prima facie evidence Garland's copious printed records might appear to be adequate for every scholarly purpose in a study of that author's career. A closer view, however, reveals that much of interest and value is still to be recounted in a life of such relationships with the artistic America of his formative days.

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1. Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decades, New York, 1931, 55.

Moreover, the writer of an autobiography, no matter how extended he may make his memoirs, assumes--he must assume--a point of view which excludes the use of many letters, documents, critical comments, and other sources of significant data. These materials await other hands. To assimilate the published and unpublished facts on Garland and to write of him with as clear an objectivity and as true a perspective as one can is, then, perhaps a task worth undertaking.

### Questions to be Faced

It is well to inquire at the outset, What are some of the questions which such a study might attempt to answer?

Toward the end of Mark Twain's America, Mr. Bernard DeVoto writes: "It would seem that to bring to the material of literature in America new areas of life and experience is creation. . . .To stamp upon that world an impression of oneself so vivid and so inimitable that it can never possibly be mistaken for the seal of anyone else is creation. To fructify a waste place so that dozens of writers who come after may thoughtfully reap the excess of one's sowing is creation."<sup>2</sup>

How far does Garland fulfill this idea of literary creation? Did he stamp upon his work the imprint of a distinctive personality? Did he influence the development of American realism? Was he read and admired by his younger contemporaries, including Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis,

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2. Mark Twain's America, Boston, 1932, 299.

Zona Gale, and Ruth Suckow? How far do Garland's experiences reflect the state and status of authorship in the 1880's and the 1890's? These are questions to which the writer must address himself.

Though this is primarily a biographical and not a critical study, a further purpose is to relate the history of the writing, the publication, and the reception of Garland's early books, particularly the following:

Under the Wheel, 1890

Main-Travelled Roads, 1891

Jason Edwards, 1892

A Little Norsk, 1892

A Member of the Third House, 1892

A Spoil of Office, 1892

Prairie Folks, 1893

Prairie Songs, 1893

Crumbling Idols, 1894

Rose of Dutcher's Couilly, 1895

But all other purposes in a biographical study must be subservient to that of giving an account of a man's life. If from the mass of data brought to bear on the subject a human portrait does not emerge, the writing has failed of its true aim. For as Joseph Hergesheimer puts it: "A biography, correctly regarded, is a study of an individual, to the degree that the person can be individual. It is a consideration of uniqueness."<sup>3</sup>

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3. Joseph Hergesheimer, "Biography and Bibliographies," in Elmer Adler, ed., Breaking into Print, New York, 1937, 76.

### Materials

The sources of this dissertation are voluminous. Besides Garland's autobiographical books--such as A Son of the Middle Border, A Daughter of the Middle Border, Trail-Makers of the Middle Border, Roadside Meetings, and Companions on the Trail--there are the primary sources. These include:

1. Scores of Garland's unpublished letters, received or obtained in the original or photostat form;
2. Scores of letters from various persons, including his fellow-craftsmen, concerning Garland;
3. His literary notebooks, which he began keeping as early as 1884;
4. Garland's marginalia in books lent from his private library--books which have influenced his thinking and his writing.

Furthermore, there are the secondary sources--the printed interviews, the magazine articles about him, and the sketches or appraisals found in books on American Literature--which are to be drawn upon judiciously.

Finally, the writer of this dissertation has had the advantage of corresponding and (occasionally) of conversing with Hamlin Garland in the course of an acquaintance extending over a number of years.

### Method of Presentation

Any student of literary history will recall cases in which an answer to the question when has flooded a problem with light. A biography, as a reflection of life, must take strictly into account the element of time. Garland's development proceeded

so steadily across the years that the chronological method has recommended itself as the most effective way in which to present this memoir.

Place has likewise been of the utmost importance in the career of Hamlin Garland. Therefore, the use of geographical headings will perhaps not seem illogical.

#### Acknowledgments

To mention all who have helped in the preparation of this study would hardly be practicable. The use of the materials borrowed from persons or institutions is acknowledged in the footnotes. For the generosity of the late Hamlin Garland, whom I often had the pleasure of thanking for kind favors, and of his family, I wish to record once more my gratitude for making available most of the original materials used herein. I would acknowledge moreover my indebtedness to the late Dr. Robert S. Newdick, under whom I began the writing of this dissertation.

Dr. Harlan Hatcher, under whom the larger part of the composition was done, has been a patient and inspiring adviser. For helpful suggestions I wish to thank also Dr. T. C. Pollock, of the New Jersey State Teachers College; Dr. Leonard Beach, of the Ohio State University; Prof. Raymond W. Pence, of DePauw University; and Mr. Hyatt H. Waggoner, of the Municipal University of Omaha. Mr. Roger Edward Smily and the Pennsylvania State College Library have my gratitude for the loan of his Master of Arts thesis, "An Index to the Autobiographical Works of Hamlin Garland."

Mr. E. W. King, Librarian of the Miami University Library, and Mr. Edward B. Morrison, of the Manuscripts Division, the New York Public Library, have been graciously cooperative. In naming them I would not disparage the aid which I have received from many others in their admirable profession, without whose help one would find the path of scholarly endeavor thorny, if not well-nigh impossible.

To the Faculty Research Committee of Miami University I am grateful for a grant in aid with which to purchase original and photostat letters.

## NEW ENGLAND AND OHIO

Hamlin Garland was proud of the fact that as far back as the early seventeenth century, members of his family were in America.<sup>4</sup> "Peter Garland, mariner, with wife, several sons, and perhaps daughters, came from Wales between 1620 and 1627."<sup>5</sup> Originally, they were Sussex folk descended, so the genealogist states, from John Garland, warden of the Cinq Ports in the fifteenth century. It would be possible to trace the line step by step from the sea-going forbear who, we find, "was admitted inhabitant of Charleston, Mass. Bay in 1637, with seventeen others, including John Harvard, founder of Harvard College."<sup>6</sup> But, after all, as Albert Bigelow Paine has observed, "an ancestor more or less need not matter when it is the story of a descendant that is to be written."

### The Garlands from Maine.

The facts concerning those of his immediate antecedents whom Hamlin Garland knew, however, may be of interest. Both his father and Grandfather Garland bore the name Richard. The elder Richard, grandsire of Hamlin, was a merchant and a carpenter. Born August 25, 1805, he lived in Greenwood, Maine, until 1850, when he moved

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4. From the Garland Genealogy in the files of the family. The Descendants (northern branch) of Peter Garland, meriner [sic], By James Gray Garland, Biddeford, Maine, Watson's Illuminator Print, 1897.

5. Ibid., 1.

6. Ibid., 2.



to Monticello, Wisconsin, next to the village of Burns, and then to Onalaska, a tiny lumberman's village, near LaCrosse in 1861. He died in 1886.<sup>7</sup> His wife was the grandmother whom Hamlin Garland credits with interesting him in literature and learning. "She gloried in New England traditions, and taught us to love the poems of Whittier and Longfellow."<sup>8</sup> Her maiden name was Harriet Roberts, and like her husband she was from Maine, having been born in Portland in 1810. She died at Onalaska in 1871.<sup>9</sup>

Richard Hayes Garland, the father of Hamlin, was, according to the record, born in Norway, Oxford County, Maine, in 1830. "His childhood was spent in Greenwood, upper city, not far from Lock's Mills," as his son recounted it. "His life as a boy was full of hardship. His clothing was homespun and insufficient. His food coarse and scanty and his pleasures few. He went to school but a few weeks in the winter, and at ten years old was hired out to a neighboring farmer for five dollars per month."<sup>10</sup> In 1848 or '49 he went to Boston where he was to spend about three years as a teamster. "This is one of the most splendid memories of his life, for he went to the theater every week and saw Booth, Forrest, and many of the greatest actors of the day." Richard Garland never forgot those Boston years, and (what is more to the point in this memoir) he never entirely ceased talking about them as long as he lived.

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7. Ibid., 5.

8. Hamlin Garland, A Son of the Middle Border, New York, 1917, 29.

9. Garland Genealogy, 5.

10. The facts here are based upon a manuscript entitled "Biographical Notes of R. H. Garland," by Hamlin Garland.

Late in 1851 he took the trail to the West and became a lumberman in the pine woods of Wisconsin, near the present town of Wausau. "In winter time he bossed a crew of choppers and in summer he ran rafts of lumber down the river to Dubuque, and other points where saw mills were located. He became exceedingly expert in 'running the river' and was known as Yankee Dick, the Pilot."

After six years as woodsman and riverman he took the advice of a physician in the pineries who told him, "Get on dry land. Let the sun soak into you. If you stay here you'll lose the use of your legs altogether." While going afoot through the country, he came upon a camper who, being on his way to settle in Minnesota, was eager to sell a farm near West Salem in LaCrosse County, approximately thirteen miles east of the Mississippi River on the Western edge of Wisconsin. The deal was made at the roadside, and in 1856 Richard Garland became a farmer.

#### The McClintocks from Ohio.

At West Salem he met and married Isabel McClintock, daughter of a strong-armed pioneer, Hugh McClintock. She was born "about 1838,"<sup>11</sup> her son once told me, in Coshocton County, Ohio, whence the "numerous, handsome, and powerful Scotch-Irish family" had migrated in the 1830's from Chaneyville in Pennsylvania.<sup>12</sup> Some time during the 1850's the McClintocks, like the Garlands, followed the farther westward line of settlement into the coulees of the new state of Wisconsin.

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11. A letter in her handwriting, dated "June 1, 1888, Ordway, Dak.," says: "Did you know I was fifty years old last April?"

12. Hamlin Garland, letter dated May 19, 1923, to D. H. Aaron, Chaneyville, Pa.

Concerning his parents' marriage, Hamlin Garland has written:

"He had little to offer her but an ox-team, a two-room cabin and scant furniture, but they were married in 1857, and again my father went into the pinery (this time on the Black River) taking his young wife with him. That winter she cooked for a crew of twenty men.

"In the summer he worked land on shares. Life was primitive, hearty and wholesome in those days. Where all were poor poverty was no disgrace.

"In the spring of 1858, still filled with a restless desire for new land, free land, my father sold his place and became one of twelve men who set out on a land-seeking trip into Minnesota. Each man drove two yoke of oxen, and in his own wagon my father carried a year's provisions. This was a wonderful trip into a land of lakes, savannahs, forests and flowering meads, swarming with game. The party got far away from civilization. They finally reached a point north west of St. Paul, where Fergus Fall now stands. At this place the government sent out some soldiers, rounded the landseekers up and headed them eastward, saying that the Sioux were on the warpath, and the sooner they got back to Wisconsin, the better.

"They reached West Salem without mishap in July, just in time for harvest, and again my father rented a farm with intent to earn money to buy a place of his own. In the autumn he bought a share in a threshing machine. Meanwhile a little girl had been born to him, and was named Harriet Edith, after her two grandmothers, and his wanderings for a few years were confined to the county."<sup>13</sup>

This was the simple beginning of what Mr. Carl Van Doren has called "the saga of the Garlands and the McClintocks."<sup>14</sup>

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13. MS. "Biographical Notes of R. H. Garland," 5-6.

14. The Nation, CXIII, November 23, 1921, 597.

## WISCONSIN

The Coulee Country<sup>15</sup> in western Wisconsin is one of the distinctive parts of the American landscape. Geologically, it is in the so-called Driftless Area, which has been the subject of a number of scientific books and articles.<sup>16</sup> The whole region is one to make an unforgettable impression on anyone and especially on an imaginative boy.

"Glaciers of the ice age were diverted from this narrow strip of territory in Wisconsin and Minnesota along the Mississippi River, leaving its ancient rock exposed to the rains and winds of long centuries."<sup>17</sup>

These picturesque rocks look not unlike the ruins of castles. The Coulee Area, in Wisconsin, averaging approximately fifty miles east and west, extends north and south the whole course of the Mississippi River in the state.

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15. The word coulee is of French origin, and in the work of Garland it is spelled variously--coolly, coule, coully, cooley--a fact perhaps attributable to his belief in simplified spelling, the movement for which Garland joined wholeheartedly. For the purpose of this study the spelling coulee, that employed in scientific discussions of the area, will be used. The word is pronounced as if it were coolly.

16. T. C. Chamberlin and R. D. Salisbury, The Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi Valley, 6th Annual Report, U. S. Geological Survey, 1885, has been called "the most complete discussion" of the Area. A complete bibliography is given in Lawrence Martin, The Physical Geography of Wisconsin, Madison, 1932.

17. Mark R. Byers, "Wisconsin's Coulee Region," The Wisconsin Magazine, Vol. I, No. 8, November, 1923, 8.

"It is a bewildering country, a constant succession of high, bony ridges and valleys, some narrow precipitous glens, others broad and flat-floored. But in every direction run ridges and deep valleys--coulees, to give the local name which clings to the whole region."<sup>18</sup>

In each coulee dwell commonly from five to seven farm families, though there are in rare cases as many as twenty or as few as two families. One finds on the map of LaCrosse County many different coulees bearing such names as Gill, Larson, Scotch, Spring, Tamarack, Hoyer, Bell, Johnson, Gavin, Jones, and Green, the coulees often being named for the first settlers.<sup>19</sup>

The tiny village of West Salem is situated in the heart of the Coulee Country. In the year Abraham Lincoln was elected to the Presidency, it was hardly more than a scattering of houses at an intersection of mud roads. The farm to which Richard Garland had brought his bride was on a main-travelled road about half a mile east of the settlement. Here, in a house which he has described as "a bare little box of pine,"<sup>20</sup> the first son of Dick and Isabelle Garland was born on September 14, 1860.<sup>21</sup>

A political campaign which was to send a prairie lawyer to the White House was in progress. Hence the baby was named Hannibal

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18. Ibid., 9.

19. Based on a study of A Topographic Map of LaCrosse County, Issued by the Wisconsin Geological Survey, E. F. Bean, Director, 1931 edition.

20. Trail-Makers of the Middle Border, New York, 1927, 238.

21. For a number of years, beginning about the turn of the century Hamlin Garland became confused and celebrated September 16 as his birthday. In fact, most of the encyclopedias and other reference books, including Who's Who in America, give the wrong date. When asked about it, Garland replied: "The family Bible in my mother's handwriting names September 14, 1860, as my birthday. That settles it. For many years the Bible was lost and I had no clear authority on the date. I have it now." Postal card to Eldon Hill, dated October 25, 1935.

Hamlin Garland after Lincoln's vice-presidential "running mate" from Maine.

That autumn Richard Garland bought on "three years' time" from Ben Cooper, his old friend and employer in the pineries, a tract of land in Green's Coulee, a few miles to the westward.<sup>22</sup> During the winter he built his house of lumber which he turned out at night with permission of the owner at the saw mill in which he worked by day for regular wages. Some time in the spring of 1861 he moved his little family to their coulee home.

By dint of hard work Richard Garland paid for his farm. On December 24, 1863, the next day after receiving the deed to his land, he went to LaCrosse and enlisted in Company D of the Fourteenth Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers.<sup>23</sup> Ben Cooper,<sup>24</sup> who was provost-marshal at LaCrosse offered to put Garland in charge of the barracks until the end of the war. "I couldn't do that," the 33-year-old farmer replied. "I couldn't stand to have all my friends sneering at me and saying, 'He'll never smell powder'." So he volunteered to go to the front.

"Consider what this means," his son was later to comment. "He now had three children--Harriet, aged five, Hamlin, three years old, and Franklin, barely nine months. His farm was only partly under cultivation, his house was a rude shanty, and yet responding to the call of his country, he left his young wife and his three children, to go into military service, from which he was almost sure never to return."<sup>25</sup>

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22. The facts in this account are based upon a MS. "Biographical Notes of R. H. Garland" by Hamlin Garland.

23. The facts concerning Garland's war service are taken from an official Certificate of Service in the Adjutant General's Office, State of Wisconsin.

24. The Ben Plummer of Trail-Makers of the Middle Border.

25. "Biographical Notes of R. H. Garland," 7.

As a private in the Infantry, he saw active service in a number of battles, the most notable of which were those of Nashville and of Atlanta. He served until the end of the conflict and received his honorable discharge on October 9, 1865.

In the opening pages of A Son of the Middle Border and in the short-story "The Return of a Private" Hamlin Garland has told of his father's homecoming from the War. Richard Garland's military experiences, with each telling and re-telling, were to make an ineradicable impression on his literary-minded son.

The soldier did not return in a glare of heroics. He came back to the toil of his stump-filled farm. Or as Hamlin Garland expressed it, "His war with the South was over, and his fight, his daily running fight with nature and against the injustice of his fellow-men, was begun again."<sup>26</sup>

Richard Garland's people lived at this time in the tiny village of Onalaska, which lay between Green's Coulee and LaCrosse, the river town whose spires "rose from the smoky distance," and whose "steamships hoarsely giving voice suggested illimitable reaches of travel."<sup>27</sup>

Onalaska, now a sleepy hamlet, was an interesting place in those days.

"It was called a 'boom town' for the reason that 'booms' or yards for holding pine logs laced the quiet bayou and supplied several large mills with timber. Busy saws clamored from the islands and great rafts of planks and lath and shingles were made up and floated down into the Mississippi and on to southern markets."<sup>28</sup>

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26. Main-Travelled Roads, Boston, 1891, 215.

27. A Son of the Middle Border, 27.

28. Ibid., 27.

That all these activities appealed to the coulee lad there can be no doubt, for he was to use his memories of Onalaska in his early fiction.

On the farm the boy of seven had his regular chores. He broke nubbins for the calves and shelled corn for the chickens. He helped drive the cows to pasture and carry water to the laborers in the field. He brought in the kitchen wood.<sup>29</sup>

But the life on the coulee farm was not altogether a toilsome struggle. There were times of idyllic sweetness which an imaginative boy could relish to the full. On a friendly basis he saw real Indians and came to like them. As he tells of it in his autobiography:

"Only two families lived above us, and over the height to the north was the land of the red people, and small bands of their hunters used occasionally to come trailing down across our meadow on their way to and from LaCrosse, which was their immemorial trading point.

"Sometimes they walked into our house, always without knocking--but then we understood their ways. No one knocks at the wigwam of a red neighbor, and we were not afraid of them, for they were friendly, and our mother often gave them bread and meat which they took (always without thanks) and ate with much relish while sitting beside our fire. All this seemed very curious to us, but as they were accustomed to share their food and lodging with one another so they accepted my mother's bounty in the same matter-of-fact fashion.

"Once two old fellows, while sitting by the fire, watched Frank and me bringing in wood for the kitchen stove and smiled and muttered between themselves thereat. At last one of them patted my brother on the head and called out admiringly, 'Small papoose, heap work--good!' and we were very proud of the old man's praise."<sup>30</sup>

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29. Ibid., 31.

30. Ibid., 12-13.



This experience was probably of significance, for all his life Garland admired and sympathized with the Indians, a fact which greatly affected his career as a writer.<sup>31</sup>

Then there were the joys of reading. Though the books and periodicals were scanty on the Border, young Hamlin early caught the virus of print. His Grandmother Garland, as already noted, taught him to enjoy the New England poets. His father, though not an educated man, was an ardent reader who provided his home with such published matter as he could afford. In Harriet, his older sister, the boy likewise saw a devotee of literature. In the Wisconsin home Hamlin recalled, besides the Bible, only one other book, probably a volume on agriculture, but there were in it stray bits of poetry which caught his interest.<sup>32</sup> As he tells of it:

"If my mother wanted a pan of chips she had to wrench one of us from a book, or tear us from a paper. If she pasted up a section of Harper's Weekly behind the washstand in the kitchen, I immediately discovered a special interest in the number, and likely enough forgot to wash myself. When mother saw this (as of course she very soon did, she turned the paper upside down, and thereafter accused me, with some justice, of standing on my head in order to continue my tale."<sup>33</sup>

"I was born," Hamlin Garland declared, "with a hunger for print."<sup>34</sup>

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31. His Book of the American Indian, New York, 1923, is generally recognized as an important contribution to the subject. See Albert Keiser, The Indian in American Literature, New York, 1933, 279-293.

32. A Son of the Middle Border, 35.

33. Op. cit., 36.

34. Ibid., 35.

If the psychologists inform us rightly, the first years of a child's life are exceedingly important in moulding his mature personality. Certainly these earliest experiences gave Garland the foundation for his lifelong love of literature.

But to a normal boy of seven, books are only a small part of the exciting and romantic world which unfolds before his mind. Besides "real Indians" the coulee still afforded opportunities to see deer, wild cats, and bears, all of which fascinated the mind of the borderer's son. Various breeds of snakes were common, and encounters with them brought a terror not unmixed with pleasure. Haying and harvesting with their feasts and the gathering of neighbors, also were times of delight.

But the keenest joy to the coulee lad came in the visits to his Grandfather McClintock's. There was Uncle Frank, whose somersaults and cartwheels gained for him an enviable reputation in all the countryside.<sup>35</sup> Also there was Uncle David and his violin, whose border music made an unforgettable impression. As Bernard de Voto has put it, "Incurably musical, Americans working westward carried with them fiddles and a folk art. While the frontier was still a boundary of exploration, the wayfarer expected to find a fiddle or a banjo hanging beside the rifle in the shanty when he sought hospitality. . . Hamlin Garland's childhood near Dutcher's Cooley was tinged with the balladry of the Scotch border, sung to fiddles. . ." <sup>36</sup>

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35. Ibid., 22.

36. Mark Twain's America, Boston, 1932, 35.

The McClintocks, assuredly, were a mystic and thoughtful people to whom the ballads of the border were a precious heritage.

"A deep vein of poetry, of sub-conscious celtic sadness, ran through them all. It was associated with their love of music and was wordless. They furnished much of the charm and poetic suggestion of my childhood. Most of what I have in the way of feeling for music, for rhythm, I derive from my mother's side of the house, . . ."<sup>37</sup>

But the McClintocks were not a bookish people. The only printed works which Garland ever recalled seeing in their homes were the Bible and an expose of Freemasonry.<sup>38</sup>

But all the joys which the people and scenes and activities of the coulee brought were not enough to bind Richard Garland to it. He was a pioneer; and the pioneer, as Turner has told us, was a migrant.<sup>39</sup> In 1868 he sold his 160-acre tract in the coulee, loaded his family and belongings on a bobsled, and moved across the Mississippi over into Winnesheik County, Iowa. To leave his native region was a severe wrench for the eight-year-old Hamlin, but boyish sorrows, especially if replaced by new thrills, are things of an hour. Yet this is not to say that Garland was ever to forget Green's Coulee. It was to be a part of his treasure house of memory so long as he lived and wrote.

In leaving the Coulee for the land farther toward the sunset, this little family was following the Middle Border (to use Garland's term), the advancing line of men who, with ax and plow, pushed back the wilderness from Wisconsin to Iowa and the Dakotas.

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37. A Son of the Middle Border, 23-24.

38. Hamlin Garland, "Books of My Childhood," The Saturday Review of Literature, VII, November 15, 1930, 347.

39. Frederick J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, New York, 1931, 20, 237.

## IOWA

The new farm of the Garlands was situated a few miles west of the village of Hesper, on the northern edge of Iowa. "It was," as its chronicler remembered it, "a glorious place for boys. . .

"All my memories of this farm are of the fibre of poetry. The silence of the snowy aisles of the forest, the whirring flight of partridges, the impudent bark of squirrels, the quavering voices of owls and coons, the music of the winds in the high trees--all these impressions unite in my mind like parts of a woodland symphony."<sup>40</sup>

But the restless borderman uprooted his family again the next year, having sold the farm to an Englishman, and moved to "a rented place some six miles directly west, in the township of Burr Oak."<sup>41</sup> That was in March. By August they were ready to move once more, this time to a newly-purchased farm northeast of Osage in Mitchell County.

The next morning after arriving, the Garland boys saw a herd of wild horses and were reminded that they were indeed at the edge of the wilderness. At the age of ten Hamlin did a "man's work" behind the breaking plow, besides the round of chores which had to be done, winter and summer, in storm or in fair weather.<sup>42</sup> Yet the boy found time to range the prairies like an untamed colt;

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40. A Son of the Middle Border, 73-74.

41. Ibid., 80.

42. Ibid., 84-86.

he skated in winter and played baseball in summer; he wrestled and fought; and through it all he built a body which was erect and sturdy, a body able to withstand toil and hardship unfalteringly.

Recalling those days, Franklin Garland, the brother writes:

"During the years from fourteen to seventeen in Hamlin's life, we both belonged to a baseball team composed of farm boys. Hamlin was our star pitcher. He threw curves and had a particularly effective sinker that had the big boys swinging wildly and missing. He was so effective that we beat the county seat team more often than they did us."<sup>43</sup>

In the 1870's, though that "wide, sunny, windy" land was still an outpost, it no longer knew loneliness and isolation. As every reader of frontier history knows, the pioneers produced large families; and in consequence a social life active and pleasant, if at times crude and boisterous, sprang up among them. Hamlin Garland, a boy in his 'teens, entered into the gatherings at the Burr Oak school house with characteristic avidity. Of these experiences he has left a first-hand record. Supplementing that found in A Son of the Middle Border is this description taken from a fragment of a manuscript preserved in his files:

"In the West as in most rural regions in the North, the School House [sic] was the intellectual center of the community. There the people flocked on winter nights to the Singing School, Lyceums, spelling bees and protracted meetings. There the peripatetic lecturer held forth with his magic lantern for a very small consideration.

"But alas! the spelling bees are out of date, the protracted meetings passe, the singing school a memory, only the lyceum holds out to burn feebly and is now called 'Debating School' or 'Literary'--and people have learned to accent Lyceum on the proper syllable."<sup>44</sup>

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43. Letter to Eldon C. Hill, July 19, 1940.

44. Garland has written on the MS. "about 1886" as the date of composition.

"But be the meeting what it might, the young people always went in the same way and in the same spirit. Distances were long in those early days and lonely as well, and drifts and wolves likely to be encountered, so the sleighing parties were large. A long wagon box was fitted on the bobsleighs and piled full of clean yellow straw, then an abundance of blankets and buffalo [sic] robes spread and the young people sandwiched in by careful mothers--then a shout from the driver, a sudden clamor of the bells and they were off, the horses prancing and spurning the snow in a shining shower over the dasher.

"There was always much noise and chatter on the way, the girls sang, the boys shouted, there would be two or three tunes all going at the same time, and not very good tunes either, but they had the merit of being a genuine overflow of spirits.

"The horses settle down to a swift trot. The girls draw there [sic] hoods closer to keep off the flying snow flung by the horses' swift feet, a pistol shot rings out as a skulking wolf lopez across the road, other sleigh-loads join in and a race results. The girls scream in pretended fright, the driver rises to his feet and winds the lines around his hands. Laughter is on the air like wine.--Here we are at the school house, the driver with an exultant shout pulls up with a grand flourish and leaps to the ground to soothe his excited team.

"I will not describe the lyceum in detail. It is the same from Maine to Oregon. In the usual puritanic way the men sat on one side during the exercises and the women on the other side. And they were a funny lot, perhaps more heterogeneous than in any New England neighborhood.

"There was old Dan Gibson who had a passion for heaving red oak grubs into the huge cannon-stove till it grew red as a cherry. There was Yorkshire Silas Cummings, who could talk on both sides of the question at the same time and keep at it forever. There was Herbert Walters, who toed in and grew so fast that his trousers had the air of being made for another man. Herbert was secretary and used also at irregular intervals to recite Rienzi's [sic] 'Address to the Romans' in the tone of a boy saying the multiplication table very fast.

"There was Dick Kramer, a sort of rustic Sullivan, who always had a turrible [sic] horse story to tell. And there was poor tall George Henderson at whom the boys flung paper missiles, while the girls tittered like fiends.

"And there was Deacon Benjamin, who debated the relative merits of paper and gun-powder in the tone of voice a man might use in pouring oil on troubled waters, and deprecating the stand he was in a measure forced to take.

"And there were all the rest of these prairie people, plain, unlettered, struggling with the Eng- . ." <sup>45</sup>

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45. With the foregoing syllable, coming at the end of a page and line, the MS. fragment breaks off.

Among his comrades of those days one was to become a life-long friend. This was Burton Babcock, shy of spirit and strong of body, a lad from a nearby farm. Babcock won Hamlin Garland's admiration and respect. How close was the bond between them is indicated by these highly significant paragraphs from A Son of the Middle Border:

"Although a lad of instant, white-hot, dangerous temper, he suddenly, at fifteen years of age, took himself in hand in a fashion miraculous to me. He decided (I never knew just why or how)--that he would never again use an obscene or profane word. He kept his vow. I knew him for over thirty years and I never heard him raise his voice in anger or utter a word a woman would have shrunk from,--and yet he became one of the most fearless and indomitable mountaineers I ever knew.

"This change in him profoundly influenced me and though I said nothing about it, I resolved to do as well. I never quite succeeded, although I discouraged as well as I could the stories which some of the men and boys were so fond of telling, but alas! when the old cow kicked over my pail of milk, I fell from grace and told her just what I thought of her in phrases that Burton would have repressed. Still, I manfully tried to follow his good trail."<sup>46</sup>

#### A Boy's Reading

In assessing the forces which turned Garland towards a literary career, we must consider the books which he contrived to find and devour. An undated manuscript by Garland throws some light upon the topic:

"It is hard to say what book was most read in our home. I think a life of Franklin and Milton's poems filled about equal space on our shelves: 'Ivanhoe' and 'The Hoosier Schoolmaster', a little later, tilted for supremacy. I remember weeping and beating the earth in an agony of indignation over the fate of 'The Scottish Chiefs'--but if you were to ask me what books were most vital and interesting to me in my boyhood, I should have to reply 'Old Nick, the Scourge of Kentucky' and 'Jack Harkaway Among the Red Skins.' I would leave Milton's Paradise any day to follow the fortunes of 'The Quaker Scout!'"

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46. Op. Cit., 135-136.

Supplementary to this is another unpublished excerpt, written by Garland in the late 1930's:

"In fulfilling a promise to write a short article for the Saturday Review, I spent several days peering back into my childhood in Wisconsin, mentally searching the homes of our Iowa neighbors in order to list the books which they then owned. I could recall only a few volumes; "The Spy of the Rebellion" was one of these. My father subscribed for the Toledo Blade, mainly, I think, because of his enjoyment of the weekly letters by Petroleum V. Nasby, and for the New York Weekly Tribune, but books were scarce on the border. We had the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin and also that of P. T. Barnum. Our township had not yet established a library--that came later. I think we began to get books from the Grange in Burr Oak<sup>47</sup> about 1875."<sup>48</sup>

One of the first books which he recalled possessing was Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp, which was given to him as a Christmas present. This story of a poor boy and his magic lamp laid hold on the imagination of the farmer's son, carrying him into regions of shining palaces "where gold and silver and silken raiment were at the command of the Sorcerer."<sup>49</sup>

From kindly neighbors on the prairie young Hamlin borrowed books to allay--he could not satisfy--the hunger left after the meager store of books in his father's library was exhausted. Of the books so obtained, Ivanhoe was his favorite.

"I read it with such complete absorption that time and place were lost... From that time to this, I have read every new and careful study of Richard, who is still one of the most attractive of all the English kings, notwithstanding the fact that he was a Norman and lived in England only a few months of his reign."<sup>50</sup>

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47. The name of the Mitchell County (Iowa) schoolhouse which was the center of many of the Garland's activities.

48. From The Fortunate Exiles, Garland's last book manuscript, 59.

49. Garland, "Books of My Childhood," The Saturday Review of Literature, VII, November 15, 1930, 347.

50. Ibid., 347. This statement is typical of Garland's habits of reading.



In this narrow, but rich, pasturage of reading, all done (be it remembered) outside the schoolroom, an American novel likewise made a deep impression. It was Edward Eggleston's A Hoosier Schoolmaster, which Garland called "a milestone in my literary progress as it is in the development of distinctive western fiction."<sup>51</sup> He made his first acquaintance of Bud Means and Hannah and Ralph Hartsook in 1871 through the pages of a little magazine to which his father had subscribed.<sup>52</sup>

Young Garland's reading, however, did not follow lines altogether approved as standard. Borrowing from a neighbor a huge pile of back-numbers of a weekly called The New York Saturday Night, he read them with such absorption that his father ordered the return of the papers. From this incident we can imagine that the boy kept under cover his enthusiasm for Beadle's dime novels which he discovered soon thereafter. Among the titles which lured him were: The Phantom Horseman of the Plains, The Quaker Detective, Buckskin Bill, and Dare Devil Dan, King of the Rockies.

"Whether this kind of reading did me any harm or not is a question," he confesses, "but I am certain that it gave me more pleasure than anything else of that time except the circus, for the circus came only once a year while Beadle's Dime Novels were always on sale at the drugstore."<sup>53</sup>

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51. A Son of the Middle Border, 115.

52. Ibid., 114. A note over Eggleston's signature and in his handwriting in Hamlin Garland's copy of A Hoosier Schoolmaster says: "This book is from the original plates which were made by 'running over' the type from the columns of Hearth and Home in which the story first appeared in October, November, and December, 1871."

53. "Books of My Youth," loc. cit.

It should be noted in passing, however, that Beadle's dime novels were not really the type to corrupt the mind of youth. Harvey asserts, in writing of the influence of Beadle, "The aim of the original dime novel was to give, in cheap and wholesome form, a picture of American wild life." He adds that they were morally elevating and that they were the means of inciting the love of reading.<sup>54</sup> There being no motion pictures and no radio to distract him, the plow boy of Dry Run read nearly a hundred of these stories during the year.<sup>55</sup>

While attending the district one-room school Garland conned with characteristic eagerness the prevailing eclectic readers of the time. These were by William Holmes McGuffey, to whom many an American has acknowledged deep indebtedness. In 1936 when Dean H. C. Minnich, of Oxford, Ohio, a prominent leader in the Federation of McGuffey Societies, was preparing a volume of favorite lessons from the Readers, he wrote to Garland and several others of the same generation for lists of their choices. On the flyleaf of the book containing mimeographed lessons taken from the books, Garland wrote:

"I have indicated by turning of the leaves, those selections which meant most to me in the Dry Run school district, Mitchell County, Iowa, in the early Seventies. We had no books<sup>56</sup> in our homes on the prairie in those days and McGuffey's

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54. Charles M. Harvey, "The Dime Novel in American Life", The Atlantic Monthly, C, July 1907, 42-43.

55. A Son of the Middle Border, 186.

56. Not strictly true, of course; but the books were few, indeed.

Readers were of inestimable value to parents as well as students in the country schools. I gained my first knowledge of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Dickens, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Bryant, and scores of other authors, from McGuffey's readers. It is easy to laugh at some of these selections, but taken as a scheme of education in imaginative literature they were the best which the time afforded.

"Hamlin Garland,  
 "Laughlin Park,  
 "Los Angeles, Calif.  
 "April 2, 1936."

An examination of this book in which the former schoolboy of Dry Run designated his McGuffey favorites shows a decided preference for dramatic and oratorical pieces. There is also a slight leaning towards the sentimental and the moralistic. Specifically, he marked such popular poems as "We Are Seven," "Thanatopsis," "Abou Ben Adhem," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Village Blacksmith," "Break, Break, Break," "Maud Muller," "The Barefoot Boy," and "The Raven." Other--and perhaps more elevating--selections which he especially recollected were passages from Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, and Julius Caesar, and humanitarian outcries like Sprague's "North American Indians," Hood's "The Song of the Shirt," and Southey's ironic "Battle of Blenheim." Descriptive writings, such as James Gates Percival's "The Eagle" and Washington Irving's "The Alhambra by Moonlight" also deeply imprinted themselves on his mind.

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To be sure, the McGuffey books were a strange mingling of the excellent and the mediocre, the sublime and the quaint, the nobly

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57. In 1928 while walking with Henry Ford at Dearborn, Michigan, Garland quoted some lines from the Alhambra sketch to revive "the grave music of Irving's prose" remembered from a McGuffey Reader. See Afternoon Neighbors, New York, 1934, 509.

artistic and the baldly didactic. Yet they supplied the mind of the boy with the means of developing his healthy appetite for reading. Significant in accounting for his mental growth is this statement of his schoolboy enthusiasm:

"I soon knew not only my own reader, the fourth, but all the other selections in the fifth and sixth as well. I could follow almost word for word the recitations of the older pupils and at such times I forgot my squat little body and my mop of hair, and became imaginatively a page in the train of Ivanhoe, or a bowman in the army of Richard the Lion Heart battling the Saracen in the Holy Land."<sup>58</sup>

All his life this habit of voracious reading was characteristic of him.

#### A Boy's Sorrow.

In 1875 occurred the death of Hamlin Garland's elder sister, Harriet, his chief companion in the fields and first partner in the exploration of bookland.<sup>59</sup> He remembered that shortly before she died she cautioned him to be a good boy. Without doubt this first close contact with death made a tremendous impression on the lad of fourteen. "Human life," he thought, "suddenly seemed fleeting and a part of the westward moving Border Line."<sup>60</sup> All his days thereafter reflections on death were not to be for long out of his mind, notwithstanding the fact that he was a great lover of life and a magnet for many friendships.

The mood of desolation was at least temporarily dispelled when his father, in June of the same year (1875), became official grain

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58. A Son of the Middle Border, 112-113.

59. A postal card from R. H. Garland to Richard Bailey, of Onalaska, Wisconsin, dated at Osage, Iowa, May 5, 1875 says, "Hattie died this morning at four o'clock."

60. A Son of the Middle Border, 171.

buyer for the Mitchell County Grange.<sup>61</sup> The family moved to Osage, where young Hamlin Garland soon broadened his acquaintance with people and formed a taste for dancing, base-ball playing, and Saturday night festivities. All of these worldly indulgences may have had something to do with his mother's presenting him, on his fifteenth birthday, with a copy of Paradise Lost. At all events, he felt very much grown up by this time and entered into the life of the village with the same spirit of eager enjoyment which was always a salient trait of his personality.

It was at this time that the grain buyer in Osage came under the influence of Robert Green Ingersoll, the agnostic, whose eloquent opposition to the narrow church creeds of the day was augmenting the religious unrest throughout the land.<sup>62</sup> Though a little black diary of 1877 in Hamlin Garland's handwriting indicates that he attended services from one to three times on a majority of Sundays, he was, like his father, freed from creedal worship by "The Mistakes of Moses." Garland told me that during his Iowa days he frequently attended religious meetings merely to study the oratory, or to meet his friends, or to "squire" one of the girls to her home. He does not seem to have felt the moving of the spirit.

Nevertheless, he recalled one sermon which entered deeply into his thinking. This was a Methodist minister's moving exhortation on the mission of beauty. Such a subject had seldom been mentioned on the prairie, and the preacher's words opened new vistas to Hamlin

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61. Ibid., 173.

62. Ibid., 192.

Garland, who by this time had acquired yearnings for which the world of art could offer satisfaction.<sup>63</sup>

Gateway to the Sun

Osage, Iowa, in 1876, was not a place to satisfy aesthetic hungers. Though it may have seemed like a shining metropolis to the farm boy, it was in truth a dull little hamlet of board walks and dirt streets, which in wintertime ran rivers of mud. Most of the dwellings and business houses were like huge boxes of various shapes; and even the more pretentious buildings of the gentry showed the sharp angles and the ornate furbelows characteristic of that day's architectural abominations.

The chief institution holding aloft the torch of culture in Osage was the Cedar Valley Seminary, a struggling little Baptist school which had opened its doors in 1863.<sup>64</sup> It was a borderland institution, built for the sons and daughters of pioneers. According to evidence found in the little diary of 1877 the Seminary provided that its terms began in late September or early October after the fall harvest and closed in March early enough for the spring planting. Its tuition rate was incredibly small. In 1877-78 when one hundred and eighty-seven pupils were enrolled, the official report showed that the total received on tuitions was \$1,947.25, or an average of little more than ten dollars per student.<sup>65</sup> Naturally, the school was understaffed; in the year just mentioned only three full-time

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63. Ibid., 194-195.

64. Alonzo Abernathy, A History of Iowa Baptist Schools, Osage, 1907, 252.

65. Ibid., 266.

teachers served the one hundred and eighty-seven students.<sup>66</sup> Yet there were courses in Latin, Greek, French, German, oratory, music, and painting.

Hamlin Garland entered the Seminary in October, 1876. That day brought admittance to new worlds for him. As he recalled the old Seminary in a personal letter, many years later:

"Hardly more than a high school in curriculum, it succeeded in arousing something of the spirit of a college. Small as it was, it held the respect as well as the affection of its alumni. Like many others I look back upon it with a deep sense of obligation for the wealth of suggestion and association which it offered. In its small library I discovered Nathaniel Hawthorne. In its class rooms I translated 'Caesar's Commentaries', Schiller's 'Maria Stuart' and 'William Tell,' and a part of Virgil's 'Aeneid'. From the chapel platform I thundered against the Carthaginians and rumbled defiance of Senator Hayne. It was my social as well as my literary center. It was in truth my gateway to the sun. No matter how humble it may seem to some of you who are graduates of modern universities, the Seminary was a shining temple to those of us who came to it in the seventies with the clay of the autumn plowing on our boots. No matter if it is no longer alive, it is a beautiful memory to me and to many another like me. It can not be destroyed."<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, it may be confidently said that during his years at this primitive fortress of learning, Hamlin Garland's mind was awakened. This awakening evidently occurred, however, some time after 1877, for his diary in that year reflects no particular enthusiasm for his new academic life. Day after day the entries

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66. Loc. cit. The report adds, by the way, that the total income from tuition and interest on endowment for 1877-78 was \$2,425. Of this, \$600 went to the professor of languages, \$400 to the "preceptress", and \$2100 "on salary" (evidently going to the principal and two part-time instructors).

67. Letter to Ethel Lovejoy Wilson, Osage, Iowa, June 28, 1930.

"The Cedar Valley Seminary was permanently closed in June, 1922." From a letter, postmarked "Osage, Ia., April 14, 1935," written to E. C. Hill by Miss Mary Alice Fullerton, a former teacher in the institution. Miss Fullerton was in charge of the records of the Seminary.

consist of some bald comment on the weather or a simple record like "Went to school," "Went to meeting," or "Plowed in the lower forty." Not one book title is mentioned; not an author. In truth, the only possible foreboding of a literary career is a list of polysyllabic words which he scrawled in an ornate hand on the last pages of the diary.

"While Hamlin was attending the Cedar Valley Seminary," Franklin Garland tells us, "I was at home doing the chores and keeping up the farm work on the assumption that I was to have my chance when he had finished, but my chance never came."<sup>68</sup>

The brother continues:

"While at the Seminary, he was reading Shakespeare, and other High-brow works, which he would tell me about during his week end visits at home.

"The sword fights in Shakespeare made a great hit with both of us so we fashioned broad swords out of some tough elm timber we had. Then we engaged in some very lively fights, though probably not very expert. But we had loads of fun at it.

"We both rode horses like wild Indians, bare-back mostly, until I won a saddle at a county fair. Then we took turns using the saddle while the other one used a blanket with a circingle. We indulged in some wonderful races over the prairies. We did a lot of the cowboy stuff, swinging down to pick wild flowers with our mounts on the dead run, throwing our hats ahead to be picked up also with the horses on the dead run. Then we would lean down, unbuckle the saddle, then ride without anything to guide the pony but the swaying of the body or the touch of the hands on the side of the neck - things which we had taught the horses with many hours of patient endeavor - then return, pick up the saddle and bridle just to fill up the time."<sup>69</sup>

But as those years in the Seminary passed, certain it is that Hamlin Garland grew not only in physical prowess, but also in mental stature. One writer has aptly imagined him "silently searching

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68. Letter to Eldon C. Hill, July 19, 1940.

69. Ibid.



through the meager library, raising his sun-narrowed eyes from the print and wondering."<sup>70</sup> He seems to have progressed well in all his subjects except mathematics,<sup>71</sup> which has often been the bane of potential and actual authors.

By far the most important literary enthusiasm which he developed at the Seminary was that for the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom he discovered "about 1878."<sup>72</sup> He calls Mosses from an Old Manse his first profound literary passion.

"When I had finished the Artist of the Beautiful, the great Puritan romancer had laid his spell upon me everlastingly. Even as I walked homeward to my lunch, I read. I ate with the book beside my plate. I neglected my classes that afternoon, and as soon as I had absorbed this volume I secured the other and devoted myself to it with almost equal intensity."<sup>73</sup>

Another discovery which elicited his enthusiasm in those days was Joaquin Miller. He admired the quality "at once American and western"<sup>74</sup> in Miller, whose poems were the object of his admiration ever thereafter.

The professor of languages in the Seminary was not one to encourage the study of American literature. Once when the grain buyer's son wrote an essay on Roughing It, this teacher censured him for over-praising so "unestablished" an author as Mark Twain. The rebuke seems, however, to have had little effect.<sup>75</sup>

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70. Walter Havighurst, Upper Mississippi, A Wilderness Saga, New York, 1937, 240.

71. In A Son of the Middle Border, 211, he tells of receiving help in his algebra.

72. Note in Garland's handwriting in his copy of Hawthorne, Mosses from an Old Manse (Osgood edition), published in two volumes, Boston, 1876.

73. A Son of the Middle Border, 219.

74. Ibid., 223-4.

75. MS. of Garland's lecture notes, "Personal Reminiscences of Mark Twain."

If Garland read the best-seller of 1880--General Lew Wallace's Ben Hur--the book did not seem to him worthy of mention in any of his records, published or unpublished.

Besides opening new fields of acquaintance with literary works and their authors, the Seminary gave him the opportunity to take part in debates and dramatics. As part of a special entertainment in his senior year, he took the affirmative side of the question, "Should the Negro exodus be encouraged?"<sup>76</sup> Once in "amateur theatricals" he powdered his hair heavily to play a Revolutionary War veteran beholding a vision of General Washington. The next night he played opposite a prairie maiden who was "very lovely in pink mosquito netting."<sup>77</sup> He dreamed briefly of a stage career until his little troupe suffered financial disaster in a one-night stand at Mitchell,<sup>78</sup> the next town.

At his graduation exercises on June 15, 1881, he sought to justify the receipt of his diploma with a florid oration on "Going West." The whole "Commencement Programme" affords an interesting picture of educational customs in that era:

#### INVOCATION

#### MUSIC

Greek Salutatory Oration . . . . .	Anna J. Kelly
Practical Education. . . . .	B. Babcock
Doings and Duties of the Day . . . . .	Walter B. Blakeslee
The Power of Conviction. . . . .	John Cutler
The Workman Dies but the Work Goes on. . . . .	Mabel Dailey
Misdirected Efforts. . . . .	Linna B. Evans

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76. Printed program, "Closing Entertainment by the Senior Middle Class, Cedar Valley Seminary, Wednesday Eve., March 24, 1881."

77. A Son of the Middle Border, 213.

78. Ibid., 214.

## MUSIC

Going West--Rhetorical Oration . . . . H. Garland  
 The Ministry of Light. . . . . Maude L. Hawley  
 We are the Heirs of the Ages . . . . Anna J. Kelley  
 Silent Forces. . . . . A. A. Moore  
 The "Dark Horse" in American Politics. Lee J. Moss  
 Ministry of Beauty--Valedictory Oration. Amelia C. Lohr

Presentation of Diplomas and Closing Addresses.

MUSIC<sup>79</sup>

"Hurried and painful" were the farewells at the Seminary. "With fervid hand-clasp we separated," he wrote, in describing a scene re-enacted thousands of times in schools where a similar intimacy of contact has prevailed, "some of us never again to meet. Our beloved principal (who was even then shadowed by the illness which brought about his death) clung to us as if he hated to see us go, and some of us could not utter a word as we took his hand in parting."<sup>80</sup>

That gentleman was the Reverend Alva Bush. A native of New York State, he had come out to Iowa in the 1850's, had organized the Seminary in 1863, and had guided it through difficult times.<sup>81</sup> Whoever studies the records of Alva Bush's life will gain a concept of a man gentle, forceful, and sincere. He was without doubt a kindly and lasting influence upon the one who was to be the chief alumnus and chronicler of his little school. But Alva Bush was not to follow the career of any of the members of the class of 1881; for only eleven days after the commencement exercises he died of apoplexy at the age of fifty-one.<sup>82</sup>

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79. From an original copy in Hamlin Garland's files.

80. A Son of the Middle Border, 232.

81. Abernathy, op. cit., 252, 266.

82. Anonymous, History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa, Chicago, 1918, II, 403-404. Mrs. Clark Gardner, of Osage, confirms the authenticity of this record of her father's life.

Among his fellow-students the most important friendship which Garland enjoyed was that with his class-mate from a near-by farm, Burton Babcock, who had indeed been his close companion from boy-hood.<sup>83</sup> It was with this serious-minded, girl-shy youth that he roomed after the move back to the farm in 1877.<sup>84</sup> The two of them brought canned goods and meat from their homes in order to keep down expenses to less than half a dollar a day.<sup>85</sup> Through the sharing of vicissitudes, Garland and Babcock cemented a relationship that was to endure long after the Cedar Valley days were ended.

Looking back on his years at the Seminary, the stocky youth from Dry Run could recall reading important books; he was conscious, too, of having widened his circle of friends. Besides coming to know Burton Babcock and John Gammons better, he had made the acquaintance of persons from places beyond the boundaries of Mitchell County and of others a rung or two above him on the social ladder. And these experiences had given him a standard of comparison.

Recollecting the effect which one of the years at Osage had upon him and his brother Franklin, the author of A Son of the Middle Border wrote:

"It tended to warp us from our father's designs. It placed the rigorous filthy drudgery of the farm-yard in sharp contrast with the carefree companionable existence led by my friends in the village, and we longed to be of their condition."<sup>86</sup>

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83. A Son of the Middle Border, 96. Also see Supra., 16.

84. Supra., 16.

85. A Son of the Middle Border, 218.

86. Op. Cit., 205. The italics are mine.

Never again would he be content to remain among the wheat shocks and the corn rows, "a son of toil." He would escape from the restrictive conditions of the Middle Border.

A picture which has survived from that far time reveals him to have been a clear-eyed, firm-mouthed, beardless youth with a look of determination upon his face. In his heart were longings which the West of that day could not satisfy. He resolved to rise above what life had so far given him. He would help his people to rise also. He would find his "acres of diamonds" or their equivalent-- somewhere. He would go far, not in the geographical sense only, but also in the struggle for social distinction. So it was that Hamlin Garland thought "long, long thoughts" in the summer of 1881 as he toiled and sweated during those last few weeks he was to spend at the farm on Dry Run, Mitchell County, in Iowa.

## DAKOTA

Even before his son gave the graduation address on "Going West," Richard Garland had once more resolved to follow the marching line of plowmen. Crop failures in 1879 and 1880 so discouraged the Osage grain-buyer that he decided to become once more the pioneer and to go to try his fortune in the free lands of the unplowed West. Some time in the spring of 1881, he staked a homestead claim at Ordway, Brown County, Dakota Territory.<sup>87</sup>

### In Search of a Job.

Despite the subject of his commencement oration, (mainly a rhetorical effort) the older son, who reached the legal age of manhood on September 14, did not accompany his parents to "the land of the straddle bug." At the Seminary he had thought his fortune turned on a simple choice between being a great actor like Edwin Booth or a great author like Nathaniel Hawthorne; but now as he faced the world with thirty dollars, which his father had given him, he was beset with doubts. A call on his Seminary enamorata at her home in Ramsey, Minnesota, instead of lifting the depression from his mind only increased the weight of it; for he saw that his ardor was not reciprocated.<sup>88</sup>

The more businesslike object of his search was a job as a

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87. A Son of the Middle Border, 228-230. Ordway is now a microscopic hamlet approximately eight miles north-east of Aberdeen in South Dakota.

88. Ibid., 243.

teacher. Why this proved fruitless is not clear; for teachers were scarce on the Border in those days, and Garland was probably better qualified than the average applicant. Besides, he carried a letter of introduction which spoke of him as a man of unusual ability. "Mr. Garland," the letter said, "is energetic, persevering, and has a rare command of the language, which will materially aid him in explanation."<sup>89</sup>

At all events, finding himself without a school, Garland felt the contagion of the emigration spirit and boarded a train for Dakota. He rode with a noisy group of landseekers atop a freight train, but as he came down into the valley of the James, he felt once more the mood of exaltation which the boundless, unpeopled "sunset regions" invariably brought.<sup>90</sup>

Notwithstanding this buoyancy, he did not decide to stake down in the locality which his father had chosen. After earning a small sum of money by physical labor, he determined to resume his hunt for a position as schoolmaster. In a chapter entitled "The Grasshopper and the Ant" in A Son of the Middle Border, Garland tells of his experiences in vainly seeking a job. There was that unforgettable night when he walked almost twenty miles in the rain and mud rather than admit that he was penniless. There was a return to his native Coulee Country where he was saddened to see the changes in old Hugh McClintock, his grandfather. After remaining two months with his relatives at Onalaska he felt the wanderlust once more.

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89. From the original of the letter by Ed. M. Rands, Mitchell County Superintendent of Schools, September 12, 1881.

90. A Son of the Middle Border, 245-246.

In quick succession he was a book agent, office hack, clerk in a jobbing house, and a lecturer before church groups. When all these failed, he was too proud to write home for money. He contrived to buy some carpenter's tools and at last obtained work in the builder's trade.

All these experiences were of importance in his development. He was coming to grips with life. He was meeting various kinds of persons. Once, for example, a housewife confided to him her innermost troubles. At another time he accompanied a Band of Hope into a county jail for prayer and singing. Then one night Edwin Booth came to Rockford, the Illinois town in which Garland was working, and a performance of Hamlet set the western youth's mind aflame with renewed ambition.<sup>91</sup>

#### First Trip to the East.

Hamlin Garland decided to invade the eastern states. It will be recalled that his father had spent approximately three years in Boston. These years filled his mind with memories which he could never lose. Often he spoke to his sons of the glories of New England. Hence, Hamlin had no difficulty in persuading his brother Franklin to join him in his daring plan.

In June, 1882, two eager-eyed youths took the "back-trail" and thrilled to Niagara Falls, Boston Common, Concord, Lexington, Portland, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. The story of their adventures in earning their way and in "tramping it" when jobs became too scarce is told in three rollicking chapters of A Son of the Middle Border.

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91. Ibid., 265-267.



On the way back to the West, Hamlin Garland, giving his remaining money to his brother, dropped off the train at Mansfield, Ohio. Why he chose this particular town--if there was any reason--he could not recall. His idea, however, was to ply the carpenter's trade until he earned enough "to return to some small town in Illinois and secure employment as a teacher." He found work in Mansfield, and he spent his evenings with books and his Sundays walking "about the country under the splendid oaks and beeches which covered the ridges."<sup>92</sup>

October, 1882, found him teaching in a district school a few miles out of Morris in Grundy County, Illinois. Throughout the bitterly cold winter he acted as janitor as well as master of the little school in order to save all of his fifty dollars a month.

On Saturdays he offered instruction in oratory to a class at the "Normal and Scientific School" in Morris. The latter was more to his liking, as he was by this time ambitious to become a professor of literature.<sup>93</sup> He made such an impression on Professor Kern that this principal of the "Normal Dept." wrote him a glowing letter of recommendation in which he called Garland, among other things, "an excellent Elocutionist."<sup>94</sup>

The next spring (1883) he returned to Ordway with the plan of taking out a government land claim for the frank purpose of "cashing in" on it. He had no aspiration to be a farmer or cattle-raiser. As he wrote of it over half a century later:

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92. Ibid., 298.

93. Ibid., 300.

94. From the original in the Garland files. It is dated November 30, 1883.

"I pre-empted a claim just over the line in McPherson County in 1883 and 'held it down,' as we called it, for over a year. I nearly froze to death during the winter of 1883-4 but I stuck to it and got my title in the summer of 1884. I built the cabin on this claim with my own hands."<sup>95</sup>

Garland's quarter-section of land was in McPherson County, near the present town of Leola, South Dakota. A few miles to the eastward was an old stockaded trading post and near it was the home of Chief Waanata. Sixty miles to the west is the storied ground where Sitting Bull held sway, and the area which was later to be made into the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Garland's active imagination must have dwelt much on being in the land of the Sioux. That he used the bones of bison for fuel during the winter also signified to him his taking part in a mighty drama of settlement. And yet, be it repeated, he did not consider himself a settler.

A few miles to the south and east of his claim his father pre-empted a section just over the line in Edmunds County. On it he built a little general store, which he put in the charge of his sons.<sup>96</sup>

To this little base of supplies came a group of men and women, border scouts and builders of civilization. Perhaps they were not as motley a horde of humanity as Mark Twain met on the Mississippi or in the gold camps of Nevada. But they were, to a potential novelist, worth knowing. Yet the clerk behind the counter failed to

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95. Letter from Hamlin Garland to Lawrence K. Fox, Secretary of the South Dakota Historical Society, May 8, 1936. The actual date of the establishment of the claim was March 27, 1884, as transcribed from the records in the Aberdeen, South Dakota, Land Office by Mr. Fox.

96. Hamlin Garland, Letter to L. K. Fox, May 8, 1936.

become intimately acquainted with his customers.<sup>97</sup> He was engrossed in a plan which took his mind far from Dakota.

Between dealing out groceries, hardware, and dry goods and making the required monthly trip to his claim, Hamlin Garland set to work to master the history of English Literature. His outline of Taine, which has been preserved just as he scribbled it on a store ledger, shows a task carefully and thoughtfully done. To strengthen his knowledge he used Chambers' Encyclopaedia and Green's A Short History of the English People, chalking on the walls of the little cabin a chart of the important periods, events, and persons. On the ceiling over his bed he put his favorites "so that when I opened my eyes of a morning, I could not help absorbing a knowledge of their dates and works."<sup>98</sup>

Though all this study was in preparation for the teaching of literature, Garland unmistakably had also at this time the ambition to be an author. As evidence of this, he kept a notebook in which he, like his idol Nathaniel Hawthorne, jotted observations on life and ideas for fiction.<sup>99</sup> Typical entries follow:

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97. "I found little to interest me in the people who came to the store for they were 'just ordinary folk' from Illinois, and Iowa, and I had never been a youth who made acquaintances easily, so with nothing of the politician in me, I seldom inquired after the babies or gossiped with the old women about their health and house-keeping. I regretted this attitude afterward. A closer relationship with the settlers would have furnished me with a greater variety of fictional characters, but at the time I had no suspicion that I was missing anything." A Son of the Middle Border, 305-306.

98. Ibid., 307.

99. The MS. notebook is a common store ledger dated "1884, McPherson County, Dakota."

"A woman of wicked life dying alone at thirty, repentant, holding the hand of a matronly pitying woman. The only thing left for her to love.

"A man of fine mind to be made a wreck and ruin by a physical deformity.

"A man with grand faculties and characteristics, but held down by one benumbing trait as sloth.

"He sleeps and dreams of his dear one, is wedded to her--receives the congratulations of friends, wakes and finds it all a dream.

"Cold, dismal apartments, a cold and hollow room in his heart, a scornful letter before him.

"No thoughtful man can spend a day without the feeling of death's grim dominion."

Some time during this year (1884) he came upon a volume which was to give expression to vague ideas which had been formulating themselves in his mind. This was Henry George's Progress and Poverty (which had been published first in 1879). The book filled Garland with a restless longing, which he thus recalled:

"Unrestricted individual ownership of the earth I acknowledged to be wrong and I caught some glimpse of the radiant plenty of George's ideal Commonwealth. The trumpet call of the closing pages filled me with a desire to do battle for the right. Here was a theme for the great orator. Here was opportunity for the most devoted evangel.

"Raw as I was, inconspicuous as a grasshopper by the roadside, I still had something in me which responded to the call of 'the prophet of San Francisco,' and yet I had no definite intention of becoming a missionary. How could I?"<sup>100</sup>

The answer to this question came in a suggestion made by the Reverend James Bashford, who called on the Garlands one day that summer. Bashford, who was a native of Wisconsin and at the time a clergyman in Portland, Maine,<sup>101</sup> had returned west to invest some

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100. A Son of the Middle Border, 313-314

101. Bashford later was to serve as president of Ohio Wesleyan University and later still as bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

money in land. On hearing that the Garlands had lived in Wisconsin, he knocked at their door. Sensing in Hamlin Garland an unusual personality and learning of his literary studies and ambitions, Bashford urged him to go east.<sup>102</sup>

With misgivings, young Garland decided to mortgage his claim for two hundred dollars and to follow the young clergyman's advice.

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102. Hamlin Garland, Roadside Meetings, New York, 1930, 1-4; also A Son of the Middle Border, 314-315.

## BOSTON

One day in October, 1884, a young man, uncomfortable but pleased in a Prince Albert suit (his first made-to-order clothes), arrived at the old Hoosac Tunnel Station in Boston.<sup>103</sup> The dust of the Dakota plains was on him, but within him burned the ambition to put behind him and his people forever the life of poverty which they had known. He would become a teacher of literature and, if possible, a professional author.<sup>104</sup>

With no friends in the city, with no influence of any sort (save for some letters of introduction which young Bashford had given him) and with approximately a hundred and thirty dollars in his pocketbook, Garland settled in a hall-bedroom at 12 Boylston Place. It was a "sunless, narrow" abode in "a dismal blind alley whose only advantage was its nearness to the Public Library."<sup>105</sup>

Lacking the money to pay the regular tuition fees at Harvard, he applied for permission to attend lectures as a special student. The request was promptly denied. At Boston University the classes failed to catch his interest. When he turned to the school of dramatics to which Bashford had referred him, the professor made

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103. Roadside Meetings, 4.

104. A Son of the Middle Border, 316. Garland's account does not mention his ambition to become a writer, but the note-book dated "1884, McPherson County, Dakota," is evidence that he planned fictional accounts. See supra.

105. Roadside Meetings, 8; A Son of the Middle Border, 319-320.

the mistake of patronizing the young plainsman. "His manner irritated me and the outburst of my resentment was astonishing to him."<sup>106</sup>

Chagrined, Garland went back to his cubicle off the Common and resolved to study independently of instructors. He turned, naturally, to the Public Library, but even that institution did not give him any special favors at first. As an unestablished resident he was permitted to use the collection each day only during the ten hours in which the Library was open. At last through the kindly offices of one of the trustees, Edward Everett Hale, he obtained the privilege of taking books to his room. Thus the eager student was able to read for fourteen hours out of the twenty-four.<sup>107</sup>

That his mind might feast, he breakfasted on a three-cent cup of coffee and two doughnuts; ate a noon-day meal--his largest--for fifteen cents; and supped on a glass of milk with two doughnuts or rolls. His room and laundry cost him two dollars a week. Hence, he kept within his budget of twenty dollars a month and "could count on lasting through till May."<sup>108</sup>

A hard struggle it was, but worth it all to be a part of the Boston of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Minot Savage, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Edwin Booth. The literary capital of the nation in 1880's, Boston was more than that to Garland. To him the golden dome of the Massachusetts Statehouse was truly what Holmes had called it, "the Hub of the Universe."<sup>109</sup> As the young westerner

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106. A Son of the Middle Border, 322.

107. Ibid., 325.

108. Roadside Meetings, 9.

109. Ibid., 6-7.

walked under the elms or bent his head to his books under the gas-lamps, he was awed and inspired. "These were growing days!" he once wrote of them, "I had moments of tremendous happiness, hours when my mind went out over the earth like a freed eagle; but these were always succeeded by fits of depression as I realized my weakness and my poverty. Nevertheless, I persisted in my studies."<sup>110</sup> As the weeks and months passed, he became aware of a world which he had known but vaguely on the prairies.

### Backgrounds and Horizons

In order to understand the new world that opened before Hamlin Garland, it will be necessary to sketch the intellectual, economic, and social "climates of opinion" of those formative days.<sup>111</sup> For he was keenly sensitive to the tides and currents of his epoch.

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110. A Son of the Middle Border, 331.

111. Though the full list of books used will be found in the Bibliography at the end of this dissertation, it might be well to indicate the books which have been especially helpful in the preparing of the present section. Among works consulted are the following:

Thomas Beer, The Mauve Decade, New York, 1926.

R. P. and Burton K. Boas, Social Backgrounds of American Literature, Boston, 1933.

Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion; 1865-1900, Boston, 1937.

Oscar Cargill, ed., The Social Revolt: American Literature from 1888 to 1914, New York, 1939.

Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain's America, Boston, 1932.

Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction, New York, 1934.

Granville Hicks, The Great Tradition, New York, 1935.

Seth K. Humphrey, Following the Prairie Frontier, Missoula, Montana, 1931.

Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895, New York, 1931; The Golden Day, New York, 1926.

F. L. Pattee, A History of American Literature Since 1870, New York, 1915.

V. L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought: an Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920. Vol. III, New York, 1927.

Louis Wann, ed., The Rise of Realism: American Literature from 1860 to 1888, New York, 1938, pp. 1-17.



A retrospective look at the years between his birth and his invasion of the East reveals a complexity of many and swift changes. As the authors of The Gilded Age observed:

"The eight years in America from 1860 to 1868 uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country, and wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations."<sup>112</sup>

A fact of indisputable importance was the westward expansion of the country. Having begun long before the Civil War, the movement gained a new impetus after Appomattox. Indeed, as early as 1862 Abraham Lincoln had signed the Homestead Bill into a law that opened stupendously vast tracts to settlers such as the Garlands and the McClintocks. Free land! There was a phrase to make history.

In an unpublished manuscript entitled "The Vanished World of 'the Middle Border'," Hamlin Garland declares:

"The period between 1867 and 1887 is especially buoyant and hopeful. Food was abundant, free land just a few days' journey to the West. Mines were being each day discovered in the mountains, railroads were building, and forest trees falling into lumber. Beef-steak was ten cents per pound and flour three dollars per barrel. Life, even in the cities, was simple and unhurried as compared with today. Above all, doubt of the future was unknown. Even if a man were in hard luck it was considered temporary. Wars were ended. The question of poverty was considered to be individual and not social."

The spirit of optimism--not unmixed, as we shall see, with some degree of doubt and pessimism--grew with the tremendous

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112. Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, The Gilded Age, New York and London, Harper and Brothers, 1901, I, 200. Quoted in Pattee, A History of American Literature Since 1870, 6.

growth of American industrial life, a growth which the expansion of the nation made possible. The mechanization of agriculture through the inventive genius of men like McCormick and Deere was a concomitant development which brought profound changes.

With reference to the resources of the country the idea of infinitude prevailed; and therefore when someone suggested that the claims of posterity ought to be considered, a notorious reply was, "Posterity be damned! Posterity never did anything for us." So the timberlands were despoiled; the grasslands turned under; and the gold and silver mines were exploited with wanton hand. Farm lands were single-cropped to depletion; one could always move on to new soil farther west.

"The huge wastefulness of the frontier was everywhere, East and West," wrote Parrington. "The Gilded Age heeded somewhat too literally the Biblical injunction to take no thought for the morrow, but was busily intent on squandering the resources of a continent."<sup>113</sup>

The pioneers, then, were not animated solely by the glory and glamor of the frontier. When they followed the rainbow it was often for the sake of the promised pot of gold. Speaking of his father--a pioneer of exceptional qualities of mind and heart--Hamlin Garland once said:

"When the new farm failed to meet his hopes, he was just as positive that fortune awaited him one remove farther west--and again he moved. Nothing pleased my father more

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113. Vernon Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought, III, 15.

than to put his family into a wagon and go--always west. He was sure that fortune awaited him just west of where he happened to be. So everyone was buoyant . . . "114

The spirit of the time found a symbol in Russell Conwell's lecture, "Acres of Diamonds." According to his biographer, Conwell began to give this lecture in 1861, and continuing to deliver it in the half century following, he repeated it more than six thousand times.<sup>115</sup> The enormous popularity of "Acres of Diamonds" lay in the hearty optimism which it expressed. Conwell told his hearers that opportunities abounded everywhere; a man had but to reach out to grasp them. Moreover, he preached the favorite gospel of work, and the certainty and richness of the return. "To secure wealth," he affirmed, "is an honorable ambition and is one great test of a person's usefulness to others. . . . I say, Get rich, get rich! But get money honestly, or it will be a withering curse."<sup>116</sup>

Such a doctrine was grateful to the ears of the millions who heard Russell H. Conwell. The farmers of the frontier liked to believe that they could get rich. The factory laborer could expect to become a foreman or even the owner of the plant. The office-worker could aspire to the presidency of his firm. And above all, any native-born son could hope to rise to the highest office in the land. Much was made of the fact that not only Lincoln, but also Grant and Hayes and Garfield had begun life in poverty. There was equality of opportunity. America meant that, and it was good.

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114. Quoted in The New York Evening Post, August 25, 1917, and verified by Mr. Garland as an accurate transcript.

115. Agnes Rush Burr, Russell H. Conwell and His Work, Philadelphia, 1926, 307.

116. Russell H. Conwell, Acres of Diamonds, New York, 1890, 19.

But the idealism which marked what Mr. James Truslow Adams has called "the American dream" gave way, unfortunately, to a festering materialism.<sup>117</sup> Money, as everyone knows, became the god, not only of Colonel Sellers, but also of a majority of his contemporaries. When anyone asked of another, "What's he worth?" the answer invariably came in terms of dollars.

The false values, the inequalities, the acts of corruption which accompanied the expansion of the country did not fail to evoke strong protests from writers.<sup>118</sup> Even old Walt Whitman, optimist and liberal to the last, put into Democratic Vistas (1871) bitter words of censure upon the state of society. "The depravity of the business classes of our country," he declared, "is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services of America, national, state, and municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, mal-administration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism."<sup>119</sup> Mark Twain and his collaborator, Charles Dudley Warner, satirically exposed the artificiality of "the Gilded Age" in their novel of that name (1873). And Henry George "dipped his pen in the tears of the human race" to depict for millions (including Hamlin Garland, as we have seen)<sup>120</sup> the cruel irony of "progress"

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117. Adams, The Epic of America, Boston, 1937, 306.

118. Oscar Cargill, ed., The Social Revolt, New York, 1939, 1-3. Professor Cargill declares, however, that the professional men of letters were slow in crying out against "the business rapacity and political corruption of the Gilded Age."

119. Prose Works, Philadelphia, n.d., 210.

120. Supra, 37.

alongside "poverty."

Much of the economic stringency in "the land of plenty" was attributed to the wasteful granting of millions of western acres to the railroads and similar exploiters. In one of the particularly odoriferous scandals, Crédit Mobilier, the names of such prominent leaders as Garfield, Hayes, Colfax, and Blaine were involved. The concentration of wealth in the hands of great railway corporations came about by "acquisitions which were not called theft, and doles which were not denounced as inimical to manhood and independence, only because the sums involved were so huge and the recipients so rich."<sup>121</sup> Mr. Matthew Josephson, Miss Ida M. Tarbell, and others have presented that unsavory chronicle of "the robber barons."

So ruthless did the exploiters become that the people of the corn-and wheatlands rose up in the Granger movement of the 1870's, a prelude to the more effective revolt of the two succeeding decades.<sup>122</sup>

Back in Iowa Richard Garland had been a Granger and indeed had been a participant in the awakening of the western farmer. His son had known at first hand the hardships and the deprivation which were the lot of the toiler and of the toiler's wife and of their children. Was it for the emptiness of despair that the Garlands had trekked from Maine and the McClintocks had toilsomely followed the line of migration through Pennsylvania, through Ohio

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121. Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decades, New York, 1931, 6.

122. Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought, III, 265.

and on to Wisconsin and beyond? Was "the Song of Emigration . . . in effect, the hymn of fugitives"?<sup>123</sup> Questions like these were in young Garland's mind as he bent over a table in the Boston Public Library or tossed on his narrow bed in the Boylston Place rooming house.

But his mood was of indignation more often than despair, and of resolution more often than indignation. For, as always, he hungered and thirsted after knowledge.<sup>124</sup>

Now he was free to glut the appetite for reading which he had developed in Osage and on the plains of Dakota. "I read both day and night," he remembered, "grappling with Darwin, Spencer, Fiske, Helmholtz, Haeckel,---all the mighty masters of evolution whose books I had not hitherto been able to open."<sup>125</sup> Of Spencer he became more than a reader; he grew into a disciple; and as he read the works of his "philosopher and master," Garland's "mental diaphragm creaked with the pressure of intrushing ideas."<sup>126</sup> Years later he was to testify:

"As to Herbert Spencer: He was undoubtedly one of the greatest influences of my Boston days. His *First Principles* I bought, and I read his essays on Education, Style, Sociology, Ethics, and his arguments for Individual Liberty as opposed to the socialistic ideal profoundly influenced me. His agnosticism carried me far from the conventional notions of time, space, and matter. Huxley, Darwin, and the entire group of Evolutionists influenced me but I regarded Spencer's mind as the master, the master mind.

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123. A Son of the Middle Border, 368.

124. Ibid., 322; 363.

125. Ibid., 322.

126. Ibid., 323.

I granted Ingersoll's judgment when he said, 'None of them escape the circle of Spencer's generalizations.'<sup>127</sup>

Without doubt Spencer's harmonizing of Darwin's doctrines with the nineteenth century's favorite notion of progress had a lasting effect upon Garland, who commented in his little journal:

"Darwin's theory so far from degrading man shows him as the goal towards which nature has been tending. The perfection of matter through a countless series of ages."<sup>128</sup>

But the student from Dakota had other interests than evolution during that first winter of assiduous reading. In his notebook, fortunately preserved, he reflects for us the range of his exploring.

The notes begin with comments on M. Taine's "notable distinction between the classes of Literature, viz:

"1st. Literature of fashion. Which may be either Romance, Farce, Pamphlets, or any novelty born of the time and for the time. . . .

"2d. Stable Literature. Literature which is general in its nature, wrapping not a community but a race, not an age but for sic all time. It is this quality which makes the gloom of Hamlet enfold us of today. We share his trouble, his groping. The human mind is ever grasping after the solution of these great problems and, however vainly, it has a wonderful fascination for them."

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127. Letter, dated April 10, 1938 from Hamlin Garland to Eldon C. Hill. According to Farrington, Spencer had a wide following on this side of the Atlantic during the 1880's and the 1890's, and made a distinct contribution towards lifting the mental horizons of writers like Whitman, Garland, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser. See Main Currents of American Thought, III, 80, 197-198.

128. Unpublished Notebook, dated October, 1884, 1.

On the next page he terms George Sand's Mauprat "a powerful work." "No woman, it would seem, could have written it, yet there are things none but a woman could have written. For example, the delicacy with which Edmee divined how the world would look upon her marriage with De Mauprat." Garland also comments on George Sand's "refined taste in the choice of words and metaphors" and compares the French woman's "excellence in the psychological" with that of George Eliot.

An examination of the American Catalogue reveals that a large number of foreign books in translation appeared in this country in 1884 and 1885.<sup>129</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that Garland records comments on a number of Continental writers, besides Sand. Of Heine, he says (reflecting George Eliot's view), "He is almost the only writer who can make German light and readable. He is the best prosaist [sic], even better than Goethe." Concerning Turgeneff's [sic] novel he remarks: "I close Fathers and Sons with a profound respect for its author and much more knowledge of Russian thought than I knew before. In this book the author has gotten deep down into the eternal stratum of human nature. He shows us the insuperable instincts of humanity in battle with Culture."

Victor Hugo's The Man Who Laughs also made a strong impression.

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129. It has been noted that the years 1884-1886 in London likewise saw a great flow of English translations of the French "naturalists." See William C. Frierson, "The English Controversy over Realism in Fiction 1885-1895," Publications of the Modern Language Association, XLIII, 1928, 533-534.



"I lay down this book with its closing sentence ringing in my ear like the solemn boom of a funeral bell across a sea, misty, a waste. What a magician is this man, who can sweep one so utterly out of oneself, carrying him to a sublime height from which the conventional novelist is but a crawling ant. . . ."

In an entry dated May 18, 1884, Garland writes: "Victor Hugo is dying. How pregnant with meaning are these words which flash upon me this morning. It comes to me like a cold wind from the unfathomable depths of night. When the heroes of old fell they shook the earth and now when this great soul dies--God! he cannot die, such men do not die. They live in the multiplied spirits of good which they have sent abroad on their winged words."

One finds also that he has outlined briefly the history of French literature from the early Renaissance period down to the time of Hugo. The great names--Rabelais, Montaigne, Ronsard, Pascal, Descartes, Racine, Moliere, Fenelon, Balzac, Voltaire, Rousseau--are there, besides a score of lesser figures. "From 1815," he notes, "a new literature may be said to have sprung up. A literature of the people and by the people. A host of popular song writers, the first lyric poetry France has had now appears and a swarm of historians."<sup>130</sup>

Problems of the elocution and dramatic writing were much in his mind during these first months in Boston. He sets down his impressions of "Lessing on Drama" and of "Lewes on Spanish Drama."

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130. MS. notes undated, but evidently late 1884 or early 1885.

Garland records also a great enthusiasm for the acting of Edwin Booth, as he has since copiously chronicled elsewhere.<sup>131</sup>

The first noted Shakespearean actor whom he saw in Boston, however, was not Booth; it was Henry Irving. Although making no mention of Irving in any of the autobiographical books, Garland writes in his journal under the date, October 20, 1884:

"Last night I went to see Irving in Hamlet. . . . It is a very unequal performance. Rising into a terrible region, sometimes it shakes the very soul but at other times it is abjectly weak and spiritless. Mr. Irving seems to depend upon stage setting and those moments of tremendous passion to carry him through. I am contrasting him with Booth whose finished and to my mind superior Hamlet is still vivid in my memory.<sup>132</sup> Booth does not rant sufficiently to take the gallery. He does not writhe as though he had some physical pain; he rather gives one the idea of a tremendous weight upon his mind. He suppresses his feelings and by that suppression makes it effect [sic] us the more powerfully. Irving's gait, manner, voice, figure are all uncouth."

Thus did the youth from Dry Run pass judgment on the English actor.

"Miss Terry in Ophelia," he grudgingly admitted, "is fairly good." A week later, on seeing Irving's Shylock he commented:

"I do not like Mr. Irving's representation of the Jew; he has failed to give him purpose and pride. He fails to bring out the fact these dissolute nobles were dependent on Shylock and that he is sovereign when the money question is broached. He should have given him more dignity and should have shown more vividly the contrast when he breaks down in the trial scene. He should stand firm and proud as if avenging his whole nation."<sup>133</sup>

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131. See A Son of the Middle Border, 265-267, 271, 324, 329-332, 340, 343, 381-382; A Daughter of the Middle Border, 165-166, 269, 286; Roadside Meetings, 6, 11, 12-13, 48-54, 88-89. See also supra., 33 .

132. From seeing Booth in a performance at Rockford, Ill., in 1882. See supra., 33 .

133. MS. note, dated October 27, 1884.

Although Garland vaguely planned at this time a book or a series of lectures to be entitled The Development of English Ideals, "a sufficiently ambitious project,"<sup>134</sup> he continued his avid interest in American writers. One page of his 1884-5 notebook he gave over to transcriptions and paraphrases of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance." Several pages he devotes to a summary of Sidney Lanier's The English Novel and the Principle of Its Development (1883).

There can be no doubt that his horizons were broadening in these months of honest poverty and of toilsome, yet joyous, self-education. During this time he still had the two-fold ambition to be a scholarly teacher and a creative writer. Amid the quotations from Darwin, Hugo, Emerson, Lessing, and the others in the notebook from which I have been quoting are crude, amateurish attempts at fiction. "The Dying Cowboy," "The Suicide," "Mary Repentant," and "Haunted" are the titles of some of his puerile efforts. There are also some verses in an unfinished state.

Besides his literary studies and occasional play-going, Garland attended a great many lectures, especially the free ones; and in the course of time he came to feel the intellectual surge of the great city. "Symphony concerts, the Lowell Institute Lectures, the Atlantic Monthly--(all the distinctive institutions of the Hub) had become very precious to me notwithstanding the

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134. A Son of the Middle Border, 322.

fact that I had little actual share in them. Their nearness, while making my poverty more bitter, aroused in me a vague ambition to succeed--in something. 'I won't be beaten, I will not surrender,' I said."<sup>135</sup> So spoke the son of the Ordway pioneer.

Some time during that winter he heard Mark Twain and G. W. Cable in one of their joint performances. The old Mississippi steamboat pilot pleased him more than the Englishman Irving. Garland went to his room and recorded his impressions:

"Twain appears on the stage with a calm face and easy homelike style that puts all at ease. His voice is flexible and with a fine compass. Runing [sic] to very fine deep notes easily. He hits off his most delicious things with a raspy, dry, 'rosin' [resin] voice. He has a habit of coughing drily that adds to his quizzical wit. Passes his hands through his hair and wrings them. Never the ghost of a smile. Is an excellent elocutionist. Sighs deeply at times with an irresistibly comic effect. His hair is gray and thick, his face a fine one. Wears no beard except a close-clipped moustache. Is altogether a man whom you would take for anything but the funny man he is."<sup>136</sup>

Of Cable, he wrote cryptically:

"Small, dapper. Full beard and moustache. Clear musical piping voice."<sup>137</sup>

One day in the first months of 1885, Garland walked up the steps of the Boston School of Oratory at No. 7 Beacon Street. The night before he had heard its principal, Moses True Brown, speak on "The Philosophy of Expression" and had gone forward to compliment the lecturer. The result was an invitation to call.<sup>138</sup>

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135. Ibid., 324-325.

136. Unpublished journal of Hamlin Garland, dated 1884. The date concurs with that of Albert Bigelow Paine's account. See Mark Twain: A Biography, New York, 1912, II, 783-792; 799.

137. Unpublished journal of Hamlin Garland, 1884.

138. A Son of the Middle Border, 333.

This was his first chance to talk on anything like an equal basis with a man of learning, a true representative of intellectual Boston; and naturally it meant much to him. By the time the brown-bearded youth arose to go, Brown offered him a chance to attend the School, saying, "Never mind about tuition--pay me when you can." By assisting the principal in the composition of a book, Garland soon was able to earn his way. "The teachers met me with formal kindness," he tells us, "finding in me only another crude lump to be moulded into form, and while I did not blame them for it, I instantly drew inside my shell and remained there--thus robbing myself of much that would have done me good."<sup>139</sup>

When Garland, financially discouraged, almost ready to go back to carpentering, went to Brown, the latter offered him a position as "Professor" in his summer term. On the strength of this he sent home for twenty-five dollars with which to array himself fittingly for the classroom. He had his Prince Albert suit dyed; "the aniline purple had turned pink along the seams--or, if not pink, it was some other color equally noticeable in the raiment of a lecturer, and not to be endured." He bought a Windsor necktie and a new pair of shoes. He felt that better days were ahead for him.<sup>140</sup>

In the summer of 1885 Dr. Hiram Cross, a friend of James Bashford, the young minister who had urged Garland to come East, invited the instructor to move into the Crosses' suburban home at 21 Seaverns Avenue, Jamaica Plain. He was glad to escape the

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139. Ibid., 335.

140. Ibid., 340.

"sunless den" in Boylston Place even though his new room was in the attic.<sup>141</sup>

An invitation to lecture on Edwin Booth before the Wentworth Club in Hyde Park brought Garland the acquaintance of Charles E. Hurd, literary editor of The Transcript, Professors Raymond of Princeton, Churchill of Andover, and John J. Enneking, the artist. One of the auditors doubtless put the fact accurately when he remarked to the hostess, "Your man Garland is a diamond in the rough!"<sup>142</sup> His lectures pleased, and the warm handshakes of his auditors gave him confidence. He "never afterward felt lonely or disheartened in Boston."<sup>143</sup>

In January, 1886, he organized a class in American literature and became self-supporting in the awesome city. "No one who has not been through it can realize the greatness of this victory."<sup>144</sup> He had a fancy rubber stamp made containing the words:

"Hamlin Garland  
"Teacher English & American Literature,  
Shakespeare, Dramatic Reading, Etc.  
"No. 7 Beacon Street  
"Boston School of Oratory."

One of his ambitious projects this year was a series of lectures on "The Evolution of American Thought."<sup>145</sup> In preparing this series (which he hoped to publish as a book, but did not)

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141. Roadside Meetings, 19-20; A Son of the Middle Border, 340-341.

142. A Son of the Middle Border, 342-344. In this account Garland credits a "Mrs. Payne" with arranging the series of lectures. According to a MS. notebook which is at hand, her name was Payson. In Roadside Meetings, 20-23, the author uses the name "Mrs. Payson" in telling of these lectures.

143. A Son of the Middle Border, 344.

144. Ibid., 345.

145. In the MS. of the final lecture of this series he refers to the year 1886 as "the present."

Garland made a careful survey of the scholarly authorities on the subject. For example, on the manuscript of Lecture I. entitled "The Colonial Phase" he lists the following as "Authors Consulted": Spencer, Taine, Bancroft, Tyler, Véròn, Lowell, Fiske, Ritter, McMaster, DeTocqueville, and Channing.<sup>146</sup> Much of this lecture is derivative. The expression, however, is original, smooth and forceful, as the following will illustrate:

"The birth epoch of American literature was indeed a glorious one, and as we turn from the Apocalyptic splendours of the age of Shakespeare, Raleigh and Bacon, to the pitiful and meagre peasant life of New England, the contrast is disheartening. Europe was aflame with the sacred fire of art and culture. Literature, music, science, were all awake at last, and starting on their shining race. But not one ray of that light, and scarcely one throb of that enthusiasm came to our shores. . . .

"As we peer back into that murk and damp we find no pleasant pictures, no scenes of mirth, no works of beauty, no pleasant sketches of wood and flower, no songs or dances, no laugh and jests--only a blank, grusome silence, through which the high sing-song of deacon or 'Divine' pipes drearily."

With reference to his country's literature in the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century, he gives voice to an extreme attitude. "It has been said," he noted, "that if every particle of writing up to the Revolution were destroyed, the American people would sigh good riddance."

In this judgment, however, he would make one exception:

"But there is one who stands there a notable, benignant figure, representing the best thought of the time, and prophecy of the coming world of light and liberty. Roger Williams. Always pleading for some humane idea, some tender charity, some rectification of a wrong.

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146. A transcript of his more complete bibliography for the proposed volume on The Evolution of American Thought will be found in Appendix A.

"Always a learner, forbearing, humane. His mind went out so wide that he doubted the validity of what were then considered ultimates, and he held the shocking belief that the law of the commonwealth 'extends only to the goods and outward state of man, and not at all to their inward state.' This subversive doctrine was intolerable, and therefore he departed from Massachusetts.

"He was truly philanthropic. His charity toward the Indians went beyond words to deeds. In the midst of storms of wrath and fanatic hate he pleaded for mercy and justice. A right royal soul whose name is green in the pages of American history."

In the second lecture, "Revolutionary Age," he gives a large share of attention to Benjamin Franklin for whose scientific attitude and practical genius Garland had great admiration:

"If any one man can be so taken, Benjamin Franklin is a representative of the growing power of common-sense over supernaturalism and dogma, of Experience which will one day become science; he represents the observer, the discoverer, as over against the sermonizer.

"Franklin was the genius of common-sense, the high-priest of progress. He fills his age with his thought. He is its epitome. His hand mark is upon every good measure, every humanitarian project, every expeditious plan for advancement, everything which contributed to the lifting of men or destruction of misery."

Also the lecturer praises Philip Freneau, whom he calls an "Innovator":

"He is chiefly to be credited with the advance he made in poetic feeling and simplicity, but when we read his calm and flowing blank verse, we cannot but feel kindly toward him as an innovator. No matter if the theme be hackneyed, it must be said that it is the first respectable blank verse written in the colonies if we except that of Thomas Godfrey."

It was characteristic of Garland to laud the poet's verses on the Indians. After quoting some of Freneau's blank verse, he comments:

"Written in 1770, let it be remembered, when Pope was supreme, when blank verse was almost unknown to the average writer (except possibly in Milton and the Shakespearean



writers), this was promising verse. A man who can write so well as that can do better, and to Philip Freneau we owe the first appreciative poem upon the Indians. 'The ancients of the lands' had been conceived as 'children of the Devil' by most of the writers previous to Freneau. No one, so far as I am aware, had tried to write from the standpoint of the savage, or had been able to see the poetry in this mysterious race. 'The Dying Indian' of Freneau's volume 1784 aims to present such outlook on the world."

Garland calls Charles Brockden Brown "a powerful and significant writer." To exemplify this point he quotes two or three pages from Brown's novel Arthur Mervyn.

The third lecture in the series is called "First Age of the Republic, 1783-1860." As the "principal works consulted" he lists John B. McMaster's History, Lossing's Centenary of the United States, DeTocqueville's Democracy, Tucker's Progress of the United States in the First Century of the Republic "and others." After an account of the development of the American educational system, he inveighs against the opponents of progress in a way that foreshadows the mood of his Crumbling Idols (1894):

"Society is always changing, always enlarging its horizons. Old conceptions are giving away because inadequate and binding, and youth and genius are ever chafing under the bonds which hamper their growth. The old are conservative and belong naturally to the aristocratic party desiring the young and restless to walk the way they walked and found good. This inevitably lays a restraint upon the innovator, the discoverer; and a certain degree of mental stultification and barrenness results. Intellectual activity is turned to material or routine labor. Society 'marks time.' . . . Social creeds are always behind the best thought of the age.

"Intellectual progress like civilization has its pioneers, its groups of hardy settlers and then the mass. The pioneers are the sufferers, the settlers the workers and then come the rest in a vast flood, and so conquered the domain of thought stretches away from sea to sea.

"Progress consists as much in distinction of false social creeds as in the building of new but both processes go on together. The new develops from and drops the old

as the tender shoot splits and destroys the acorn, or as the flower withers as the fruit begins to appear."

Speaking of the restraints upon our literature in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the lecturer continues:

"Edgar Poe [sic], the most acute and candid critic of his time, felt and named these restrictions which in his time still lay upon the growing nation.

"1st a colony always imitates the mother country. This was most true of these colonists. Whose sermons, even, were copies.

"2nd a large class of our writings came from professional men and those of leisure, versed in certain lines of thought, who are noted for insipidity of writing. They are conservative and imitative.

"3rd the copyright steal: which has kept down the price of American writings.

"These evidently have very strong bearing upon the case but the trouble as I conceive it lies deeper than these. It lies in the low race-life which dominates everything, and formed the most powerful barrier to literary progress."

Reading these pronouncements, one cannot but marvel at the contrast between the graduate of Cedar Valley Seminary of only five years before and this self-confident critic of American literature and thought.

The last lecture of the group is called "The Present and the Future."<sup>147</sup> Self-revealing indeed are these opening sentences:

"It now remains for me to make a final chapter do duty for an outline study of the great present, whose thunder is in my ears and whose sufficiently bewildering complications and departments of thoughts and industry are crowding upon me faster than my mind can co-ordinate or my pen put into sequence of expression.

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147. Evidently other lectures dealing with the period between 1860 and 1886 have been lost.

"I am disposed to regard everything which we have attained in 1886 as the culmination of the forces working in the past; it is what it is, because the past was what it was, or, as another puts it: 'How America is the continent of glories and of the triumphs of freedom and of Democracies, and of the fruits of societies and of all that is begun.'"148

Of the books which our aspiring author read at this time, Veron's Aesthetics made a deep and enduring impression.<sup>149</sup> "The artist," Garland read and underlined, "as we have said before, lives the life of his own time and country, and so he is naturally led by the inspirations therein existing. . . .After wasting century after century in seeking for answers to the enigmas that puzzled it in the actions of gods and imaginary entities, it was obliged, in order to explain the physical and moral world, to take direct account of nature and of man."<sup>150</sup>

This very foundation of Garland's literary credo was laid upon this declaration of the French theorist:

"But the determinant and essential constituent of art, is the personality of the artist; and this is as much as to say that the first duty of the artist is to seek to interpret only those things which excite his own emotions."<sup>151</sup>

He again taught in Brown's summer school, and in the autumn he gave a course of lectures on Browning at Chelsea and a series

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148. The whole of this final lecture is so thoroughly indicative of Garland's mind in the year 1886, when he was on the threshold of his creative career, that it seems worthy of being quoted in entirety. See Appendix B.

149. In Garland's well-thumbed copy of this work, appears a holograph marginal note which states: "This book influenced me more than any other work on art. It entered into all I thought and spoke and read for many years after it fell into my hands in 1886."

150. Eugene Véròn, Aesthetics, translated by W. H. Armstrong, London, 1879, viii-ix.

151. Ibid., xxiv. Cf. Garland, Crumbling Idols, Chicago, 1894, 22, 89.

on Shakespeare at Waltham, all of which earned him a magnificent salary of twelve dollars a week, minus his traveling expenses.<sup>152</sup>

On July 2, 1886, he wrote to E. W. Howe, of Atchison, Kansas, the author of The Story of a Country Town, one of the earliest works of realism dealing with life in the West. The letter follows:<sup>153</sup>

"Jamaica Plain  
July 2/86.

"E. W. Howe.

"Dear Sir: I have just finished reading the 'Moonlight Boy'; and having seen your face and after careful attention to your first works, I feel almost as though I knew you.

"As for myself I am a critic in a small way, lecture some and teach slightly more. And what is more significant still am western born. I know several 'Davy's Bends,' and 'Country towns' I was born in Wisconsin and grew up in a troublesome manner on the great Iowan prairies.

"All this for saying I like your stories. Your strong true delineation, of the monotonous and provincial life of the rural west compels my admiration, though it grieves me to think how unavoidable the most of this life is. Has it not seemed to you a terrible waste of talent many times, when you have met men and women of fine powers, musical maybe, who were hedged in by circumstances, walking a dull routine of petty duties, compelled to forget the outside world? I have met many such and it has been a question whether I did them good by rousing them from their lethargy.

"I have just been thinking of 'Anne Benton' whose case presents very nearly, the situation of several young women I have met--I mean the musical talent and latent aspirations for a nobler life. This leads me to what I had started to say: you speak of these people not as one who coldly looks on them as 'picturesque' but in an earnest sincere tone as from among them. Your work has an indigenous quality which appeals to me very strongly: perhaps more strongly than to most critics. I can value your strong, idiomatic, western prose, I think, better than one who has not heard it spoken.

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152. A Son of the Middle Border, 347.

153. Garland quotes part of this letter in modified form in Roadside Meetings, 94-95. Since he leaves out some of the more self-revealing passages, I feel justified in presenting a copy of the original in entirety.

"I suppose you will be wondering what reason I can possibly have for troubling you with my opinions, and rightly too, for these is no especial reason for such conduct. To come at the matter briefly: the Circular within gives the synopsis of a volume upon the 'Evolution of American Thought' which I deliver in the form of lectures at the B. S. O.

"Therein I design to treat of yourself and work in the 9th Chapter. There are representative names standing for 'local, scene and character painting;' in which category you stand in solitary grandeur, in the midst of the great west (myself, your only rival, not having published yet).

"Now if you could think of giving me a few points concerning your life, such as you would like published, they would be of use to me and I think to you. I would undertake to have a magazine publish that part relating to you. I would try at any rate and if I failed I can use the Transcript whose literary Editor is an intimate friend, and who is moreover much interested in you. Please do not look for any ulterior motive here. I admire your work which so finely voices the middle west, that and the fact that I am western born explain my willingness to do you any good which lies in my power to do. In the midst of my press of study and writing upon critical lines, I am myself striving to express some of the unuttered thought of the western prairies.

"Pray do not think I ask for a biography or anything approaching it but if you saw fit to give me some sketches of your boyhood, residence, schooling etc, I could at the least give you a column in the Transcript, which would be something; and possibly some magazine might be captured by a taking article.

"I shall have some hand in the review of the 'Moonlight Boy' which by the way is puzzling all--myself included. It is realism with a vengeance. It strikes me as an avowed departure, is it so? 'All the conventional novelist would have done he has avoided' is one of the notes I sent in when I returned the book to Mr. Hurd of the Transcript.

"It is not so tragic, so powerful, of course, as the other two but it has a charm of its own. I like it for its faithful treatment of homely, prosaic people in their restricted lives.

"Hoping you will understand me rightly and value at least the good will of my letter, I remain

"Most sincerely your friend.

"Hamlin Garland  
Jamaica Plain  
Boston.  
Mass."

Howe replied, giving a great many autobiographical details, which elicited this interesting letter (now presented for the first time):

"Jamaica Plain  
July 15/86

"E. W. Howe

"Dear Sir:

"I have pondered much upon the singular life, which you out-lined to me in your letter and am more than ever convinced that the author of the 'Country Town' is the strongest writer the west owns--and more than that: From him is yet to come work greater than the best of anything he has now written. Only, he must not work upon that paper till he sears his sensibilities and loses the power of receiving new, subtle and enduring impressions. His three books are in large measure the results of reminiscences, he must move on to a wider field, and (still using the past) make a deliberate and exhaustive study of the middle west and its mental horizon.

"Great mental revolutions are going on around him. Social and religious, that should be portrayed. The empty shell of Christianity is dropping from every sane thinker in the east as well as the west. A newer and broader idea of morality is taking its place. The mental struggle, the change from the old to the new has many profound and striking aspects--They should be recorded.

"Then again there are human souls blossoming under the eye of the author of 'The Locks'. Swedes, Danes, Germans, with the seal of 'divinely appointed' despotism on their dulled and weary faces debase into the prairies of Kansas like great sewers. They set to work. The sod turns under their feet; houses are built; food broadens their faces; freedom adds to their stature and lightens their eyes.

"Their children--ah! Their children are a new race under the sun: They are born of the sun and winds and grain of Kansas. They speak two, often four languages. They go to school, mayhap college--now look at the strong, clean free young men and women one generation only removed from the men and women herded like cattle in the depots of Chicago, stupid dazed, ill-smelling: pinched and pushed and tickled like baggage--Here is a picture which the author of 'The Locks' will one day give the world. To speak direct, Mr. Howe, the west is not known as yet. All that vast seething transfiguring mass of men in the Mississippi Valley, because they have not produced their own writers are, unknown.

"Travelers go through and write a few lines as observers. Here and there some one writes of material or semi-material things in prose. None have given the deep unseen true life of the people. Do not think I am 'lecturing', on the contrary this is downright talk. Just as I would look you in the face and say if I had the chance. All the time I fear you are thinking: 'What sort of an axe does the fellow want to grind.' Confound it! I've no axe to grind. I simply want to say that I believe in you and I want to see you enthrone the office cat in that editorial chair while you sit down to write that 'best book'. We are not rich enough in genius to allow a man to 'boss' a daily paper who can write 'The Story of a Country Town'.

"I do not presume to offer advice being fully (?) three years younger than your self, but it does seem as though you could risk the relinquishment of that Editorial Chair.

"Hamlin Garland."

In an undated fragment of a letter, evidently written at about the same time to Howe, Garland says:

"Some of these writers as Howells find it amusing and frivolous--see the comedy element, in short. Others say the present is solemn, momentous and grand beyond any past. This is the belief of Walt Whitman, our greatest poet.

"I do not know how you feel as regards your work. (I should like to meet and talk with you upon the matter.) but judgeing from your work as published, I think you find something more than comedy in your world.

"You go deeper than Howells. You have not his exquisite art for you lack his leisure and his temperament but you have what moves me more, the ability to perceive and to voice the passions that shake the soul."<sup>154</sup>

The Kansas writer's reply is revelatory:

"Atchison, Kas., July 23, 1886

"Dear Sir:

"It is my ambition to be able to quit the newspaper, and devote myself to writing, but I am afraid to do it. My

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154. The letters to and from Howe are in the Garland files. In the foregoing transcriptions Garland's own spelling and punctuation are followed.

receipts from 'The Story of a Country Town' have amounted to something like \$1,200 up to the present time, and yet it has had an unusual amount of newspaper booming. Seven hundred dollars will cover my receipts to date from 'The Mystery', but I suppose 'A Moonlight Boy' will do a little better than the second story. I have acquired rather extravagant habits of living, and though I am afraid to try your suggestion, I am obliged to you for it; I would dearly love to write a book satisfactory to myself, and have nothing else to do. If I had a year to devote to a book, and failed to make it more of a success than either of the others, I would be content to drudge away on a newspaper the rest of my life.

"I had an invitation from The Century some time ago to write a short story, and several other offers of less importance, but I frankly confess my cowardice. I detest newspaper work, but I doubt my ability to live by 'fine writing'. I recently made \$130 in a day on extra features in the paper which I publish, and did all the work myself; I issue two supplements a week, during the busy season, and they pay better than books.

"I expect to come to Boston this fall, when I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you. I shall certainly look you up. The 'Crust and Garret' business in which you are engaged I desire to know more of. Very respectfully,

"E. W. Howe"

Another Kansas writer who aroused Garland's interest was Eugene F. Ware, a poet and lawyer. Some time in the last weeks of 1886 Garland wrote the author of the poems of "Ironquill" (Ware's pseudonym) a letter of praise and advice.<sup>155</sup> From Ware's reply it is evident that the counsel was similar to the warning which Howe received. Says the poet-lawyer:

"My own personal experiences call to mind some of the passages in Judge Tourgee's lecture, entitled, 'Give us a rest'. In that lecture he tells how people with literary aspirations and emotions who care but little for

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<sup>155</sup>. Ware's letter, dated January 15, 1887, refers to Garland's of "a month ago." The Ware letters are in Garland's files.



money get involved in business and give up everything else, leaving the fruition of their hopes to a future time and die with them unaccomplished, and so it is with me. I have no particular reason for plunging into such a sea of litigation and perhaps spending my life at it, and yet I am now engaged in it, and I expect the result will be that I will use myself up and break myself down, and leave all the good fellows to do the work, part of which I would like to do."

"I like literary men and things," wrote Ware in another letter,<sup>156</sup> "but a thousand dollars per month net is what I'm doing and I'm going to stay with it if it takes until summer after next."

This correspondent was voicing the spirit of the Gilded Age, a time in which anyone who had aught to do with the world had the gospel of acquisition dinned, willy-nilly, into his ears.

One day in September of the same year he discovered another Middle Western writer, James Whitcomb Riley. Garland was at the Transcript office calling on his friend Hurd, who had praised the Booth lectures in Hyde Park. Giving his visitor a little book entitled, The Ole Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems, by Benjamin F. Johnson of Boone (Riley's pseudonym), Hurd remarked, "As an advocate of local color you must take him into account." Garland did so; and soon a friendship, as a lively correspondence evinced, sprang up between the "Hoosier poet" and the aspiring young Bostonian from the prairies.<sup>157</sup>

Meanwhile, Garland was not entirely concerned with vernacular and local color. His mind continued its eagle-like soarings, its avid explorations. Although a series of lectures by James Russell

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156. Letter to Garland, dated October 28, 1887.

157. Roadside Meetings, 96-103.

Lowell on "The British Dramatists" was a sad disappointment,<sup>158</sup> he began to read seriously at this time another American poet who filled him with exaltation. Hurd gave him a copy of Leaves of Grass,<sup>159</sup> a book which profoundly affected the earnest young plainsman. "Its rhythmic chants, its wonderful music filled me with a keen sense of the mystery of the near at hand," he later wrote. "I rose from that first reading with a sense of having been taken up into high places. The spiritual significance of America was let loose upon me."<sup>160</sup> In the development of Hamlin Garland's mind, and especially of that strong note of nationalism which was to enter into his writings, this reading of the poet of "Pioneers! O Pioneers" is an event of high importance. He soon made the acquaintance of Whitman's prose writings also. Besides reading his sage's works before his summer classes, he included a chapter on Whitman in his lectures which he intended to publish in a volume to be called "The Evolution of American Thought"---a title suggested, indeed, by one of the sentences in Collect, "In nothing is there more evolution than in the American mind."

On November 24, 1886, Garland wrote a letter of homage to the Camden poet:

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158. Ibid., 42-43.

159. A notation in Garland's hand on the fly-leaf of this book says, "Given to me by Charles E. Hurd, literary editor of the Boston Transcript about 1886." This date probably marks Garland's first reading of Leaves of Grass, since there is no mention of Whitman in the 1884-5 MS. notes.

160. A Son of the Middle Border, 323.

"I am an enthusiastic reader of your books, both volumes of which I have within reach of hand. I am everywhere in my talking and writing making your claims felt and shall continue to do so. I have demonstrated (what of course you know) that there is no veil, no impediment between your mind and your audience, when your writings are voiced. The formlessness is only seeming, not real. I have never read a page of your poetry or quoted a line that has not commanded admiration. The music is there and the grandeur of thought is there if the reader reads, guided by the sense and not by the external lining or paragraphing. Even my young pupils feel the thrill of the deep rolling music though the thought may be too profound for them to grasp.

"In a course of lectures before the Boston School of Oratory last summer I made a test of the matter. I do not think a single pupil held out against my arguments supplemented by readings from your works. . . ."

He showed his practical turn of mind when he assured Whitman, "My regard for you is so great that I am very sorry not to be able to buy more copies of your book and thus give a more substantial token of sympathy."<sup>161</sup>

A worn copy of Swinburne's Poems filled with marginalia in Garland's handwriting and a lecture written on a crude, old-fashioned Sun typewriter and bearing the date 1886 reveal another literary enthusiasm for one whose name evoked controversy. "Swinburne is one of the most notable singers now living in England," we read on the fly-leaf. "Notable not only for what he promises, but for what he had already done.

"---He has written much. Too much perhaps.

"--Though now in his early prime, he has published nearly a score of volumes of verse.

"--And in range there are many styles of treatment. But the

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161. The letter is quoted in full in Roadside Meetings, 128-130.

particular phase of his genius which strikes the casual reader is his faculty for lyrical expression, which is not merely marvellous. It excels in exuberance and variety every lyric poet of the English Language."

The title of one of Garland's lectures is "Swinburne's Bothwell." After calling this English poet "one of the most noticeable figures in the modern group," Garland continues:

"In point of production no one has surpassed him and in the quality of his work few can be considered his superiors. In saying this I am well aware of the prejudice existing against him and I am well aware of his attitude toward America and American writers.

"That he has said bitter things can not be used to depreciate the greatness of his work. He is not a critic. He is the last man in the world one should go to for a calm and dispassionate estimate of a writer or a political party. Like most poets and artists his supremacy does not lie in his power to reason but in his emotional susceptibility and his marvellous gift of expression. To feel and to express these are the artist's attributes and without them he is a poor creature.

"Swinburne appeals to me as an exceedingly human being, and as a strange compound of meanness and greatness, strength and weakness. At times no living man equals him in masculinity and at others he is weak and shrill as some scolding woman. It seems impossible that the man who can produce the majestic trilogy of Mary Stuart should also be the man who shrieks in prose hurling the most scathing and biting sentences at the critic who does not agree with him. It would seem that the wonderful mind which struck out the massive and gloomy figure of Bothwell should have caught something of his calm and massive self-restraint.

"But as I have said Swinburne is human: stormily human and the very strangeness of his personality, adds to the greatness and distinctiveness of his work. For a work of art is great in proportion as it is the objective placing of the author's personality. And the personality of Swinburne is so great that he has not only thrown off the terrible weight of Tennyson in the lyrical but the still more terrible weight of Shakespeare in the dramatic, not to speak of the great and coercive genius of Robert Browning.

"To appreciate the difficult of the feat, it must be remembered that Swinburne is a marvellous scholar. The classics are familiar to him and have been from his earliest days. The Greek language and the French language he is master of and writes in them both and in his earlier dramas he brought up and sustained as almost no other man ever did the Greek form and spirit of art. Besides this he has ever been in close contact with Browning and Tennyson and in the atmosphere of the classic English authors, all of which is no aid to originality in the estimation of many minds.

"But all this has not prevented him from being modern and original both in the form and the substance of his poetry. . . ."

It is probable that the lecturer found himself in a minority as an admirer of Swinburne in the Boston of 1886. But the son of a pioneer was too much the individualist to be perturbed by opposition. After all, Garland was soon himself to become a rebel who would do battle against conventions in life and art. He was already beginning to consider himself one of the younger intellectuals of the literary capital.<sup>162</sup>

For one week, however, the problems that beset the critic and the teacher and the aspiring artist took a subordinate place in his life. Burton Babcock, of Burr Oak Township, his boyhood chum and his roommate at Cedar Valley Seminary, came east in the summer; and for seven enjoyable days they talked of "old friends and old days in the manner of middle-aged men." As Garland recounted it:

"He told me that John Gammons had entered the Methodist ministry and was stationed in Decorah, that Charles, my former partner in Dakota, had returned to the old home very ill with some obscure disease. Mitchell Morrison was a watch-maker and jeweler in Winona and Lee Moss had gone

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162. A Son of the Middle Border, 348.

to Superior."<sup>163</sup>

Babcock must have returned west with the idea that his friend was "doing well."

The end of the year 1886 saw Garland with the responsibility for his younger brother, Franklin, who had fallen into evil days after their father had been compelled, on account of hard times, to close the little store in Edmunds County, Dakota. Remembering that the Cedar Valley schooling had been at the expense of "the Junior"--a not uncommon situation in American families--Hamlin Garland wrote, "Come to Boston, and I will see if I cannot get something for you to do."<sup>164</sup>

To be able to say this, the young man who had arrived in Boston one day in 1884 with the dust of the Dakota plains upon him had gone far in those two busy years.

#### Writing for the Boston Transcript

Late in January, 1887, he reviewed William Dean Howells's The Minister's Charge for the Transcript.<sup>165</sup> This was the review which led the editor-in-chief, E. H. Clement, to put it at the head of the editorial page and to ask to have the writer sent to him.<sup>166</sup> As this article represents what Garland was thinking about fiction in general as well as about Howells in particular it may be well to quote a part of it:

"Much as in 'Silas Lapham,' there is a group of central figures, delicately but distinctly outlined, while

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163. Ibid., 346.

164. Ibid., 348. In a letter to the present writer Franklin Garland states that he was first employed in a clothing store in Boston.

165. Transcript, January 31, 1887.

166. A Son of the Middle Border, 384-5.

all around, more and more indistinct as their connection with the main characters is slight, are glimpses of personages who come for a moment into the half light or flit across the background and are gone. In this way is the reader made conscious of the great city and of the strange contacts which the citizen always has with strangers, suggestive, often momentous. The character of Lemuel Barker is even more pronounced in its realism than Silas Lapham, and can be studied to advantage by the foreigner, and, indeed, by our own people. It is by such work as this that the danger of class legislation and class misprision can be averted. . . .

"Mr. Howells by this book added to his reputation, notwithstanding the power of the 'Modern Instance' and 'Silas Lapham.' The delineation of the growth of Lemuel is a close psychologic study, more minute and coherent perhaps than that of Bartley Hubbard. From a green country lad with no more knowledge of Boston than of Egypt, we see the sterling qualities brought out in him by a series of hard experiences which would have driven a weaker character to crime. The son of the woman who could wear 'bloomers' in the face of Willoughby Pastures (or the world for that matter) was not to be dazed and benumbed by a few days' hunger or some nights in the Home for tramps, and we shall yet see Lemuel triumph. He may yet take to journalism and become as strong and true as Bartley Hubbard was brilliant, weak and debased, thus setting as companion-pieces sturdy, honest reticence and inexperience over against glibness, brilliancy and unscrupulous expediency. This we trust is the design hinted at in the last few lines of the present volume.

"To those who like to have all the villains killed and the honest men rewarded, the heroines all married to their respective lovers, and everything comfortably arranged in the last chapter, his ending of the 'Minister's Charge' is aggravating, to put it mildly. But those who know that such comfortable division of rewards and punishments is purely a conventional survival of classic methods, will welcome a sensible realistic conclusion. The pursuit and not the end is the design of the modern novel; the delineation of actual human life, not the fantastical visions of some social theorist or the fancies of some romancer's heated brain. Art that can be verified is in the ascendancy, with heroes that are actual and heroines that are real. The time will yet come, if it has not already, when the public will recognize Mr. Howells as a public benefactor for replacing morbid, unnatural and hysterical fiction with

pure, wholesome and natural studies of real life."<sup>167</sup>

In A Son of the Middle Border<sup>168</sup> Garland states that "it must have been two years" after the appearance of the review and that editor's praise of it that he met William Dean Howells for the first time. Documentary evidence indicates that he is in error. Indeed, according to another of Garland's datings, it was in 1887 that the memorable first meeting occurred.<sup>169</sup> This seems more probable, for it was his review of The Minister's Charge in January, 1887, that led to the call on the novelist at Lee's Hotel in Auburndale.<sup>170</sup> Garland makes no record of corresponding with Howells before seeing him. The extant letters from the older writer to Garland begin on January 15, 1888, with a reference which indicates that the two men are more than epistolary acquaintances. Furthermore, in 1888 Garland visited Howells at "Watertown just beyond Belmont."<sup>171</sup> Hence, we may conclude that Garland's date of "1887" is more probable than the time "two years" after

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167. Clement, the editor who liked this review and encouraged its writer, gives us an interesting bit of self-revelation in a letter thanking Garland for the references to Clement in A Son of the Middle Border: "I was much touched by the generosity of your recollection of my small part in your opportunity. I shall go to posterity in the character I most value,--as the editor who made way for unrecognized merit--the editor of the Transcript when it was the Transcript. It was my liberalism, my democracy, hospitality to radicalism, new, unorthodox persons and things, that undid me,--though, still, I held the editor-in-chief job for twenty-five years--1881-1906. If you climb the Transcript's particularly steep stairs, you will not find me. I never visit the editorial rooms now, but send in my copy, twice a week. . . ."

168. P. 385.

169. Garland, "Meetings with Howells," The Bookman, XLV, March, 1917, 3.

170. A Son of the Middle Border, 385.

171. MS. notebook dated 1888. See also Roadside Meetings, 122.



the appearance of his review of Howells's novel.

In the May 16, 1887, issue of the Transcript appeared over Hamlin Garland's name a review of Joseph Kirkland's new novel of Illinois life, Zury, The Meanest Man in Spring County. This review takes on so large a significance in the light of Garland's later work as a writer of Middle Western stories that it is perhaps worth quoting in part:

"The prairie West has produced but little in the line of native fiction, fiction which is based upon the manners and customs of the people; indeed it is simply the truth to say, that with the exception of the Hoosier stories of Edward Eggleston and the romances of E. W. Howe, there has been nothing produced in that region of our country which is worthy of national regard. All or nearly all has been conventional or exotic. The writers of the West had not (and have not now) risen to the full knowledge of the fact that the realistic study of their actual surroundings was their only salvation from utter conventionality, and the only way to extend their circle of readers. And yet the success of Eggleston in the 'Hoosier Schoolmaster' and in 'Roxy' ought to have shown them in which direction lay originality and fame. Mr. Howe, in his earlier books, despite their gloomy and impressive power, made only a partial advance toward realism, though he has now written one book (and has projected another) on a healthier and sunnier plane, and from this time forth is to be counted among the realists. But the full revelation of the inexhaustible wealth of native American material, and wealth in a section hitherto considered barren and hopeless of art materials, will come to the Eastern reader with the reading of 'Zury', the new novel of Western life by Joseph Kirkland. The book is moreover likely to have a very great influence upon any Western writer who is planning a new novel. To say that Joseph Kirkland has written the most realistic novel of American interior society is to state the simple fact. It is as native to Illinois as Tolstoi's 'Anna Karenina' or Tourgenieff's 'Fathers and Sons' are to Russia, and while none but a Western-born reader can appreciate it to the full, nevertheless it is not likely to fail of appreciation by the intelligent reader in Eastern cities or in the old world, its descriptions are so infused with real emotion and are so graphic. The book is absolutely unconventional. The author has simply studied the life of the locality written of, and has told his story in a perfectly free and fresh manner; not a trace of the old-world literature or society, not a touch of sentimentality,--and every character is new and native."

Two Trips Back to the West

The year 1887 is chiefly memorable for Garland's first return to his native West in almost three years. Late in June it was when he took the train at the Hoosac Station, bound for Osage.<sup>172</sup> "As we got to Oberlin," he noted, "the rye and winter wheat began to show up, while shocks stood thickly over the field. All was thrift and plenty, apparently."

"I was delighted to observe more chin whiskers among the men and more weight as we neared the west. More color in the cheeks, more variety as to dress. Coats did not fit so well on the whole, but there was a certain strength and heartiness which compensated. . . .

"How forlorn the laborers looked to me in the fields under the hot sun, looking forward to the 4th of July, a thing to cheer them on to plod for other days under the burning sun. What a life, what a tragedy. It is that men are condemned to such toil with no better hope than to go to a celebration of the glorious 4th. From my standpoint at present it is all unprofitable.

"I began to hear Scandinavian words and talk at Toledo and westward. Idlers sitting beside the track under the trees with their shoes off enjoying the breeze. They had nothing to do."

In Chicago he met Kirkland, who had graciously invited him to call after reading the Transcript review of Zury.<sup>173</sup> He found Kirkland to be a lawyer as well as novelist and the son of Caroline Kirkland, a pioneer woman writer.<sup>174</sup>

"He [Kirkland] gave me a great deal [sic] excellent talk concerning the art of fiction and advised me to write. I found him living in what was to me a most imposing house on Rush Street. His people seemed to regard me as

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172. MS. notebook, dated 1887. A transcription of this significant notebook is given in full in Appendix D.

173. A Son of the Middle Border, 354.

174. Roadside Meetings, 110-111. Caroline Kirkland wrote A New Home--Who'll Follow? (1839), Forest Life (1842), and Western Clearings (1845).

something that had blown in from outside."<sup>175</sup>

Garland left the next day for Osage, resolved to observe carefully the land and the people of his youth.

"Once out of the city, I absorbed 'atmosphere' like a sponge. It was with me no longer (as in New England) a question of warmed-over themes and appropriated characters. Whittier, Hawthorne, Holmes, had no connection with the rude life of these prairies. Each weedy field, each wire fence, the flat stretches of grass, the leaning Lombardy trees,--everything was significant rather than beautiful, familiar rather than picturesque."<sup>176</sup>

"Corn fields, apple orchards, and sheaves of waving blades of wheat, rank and red, appealed to me with great power. The variety of the shades of green as the wind turned the leaves upward and depressed them struck me with new beauty. Each field had its special tones and movements oats, barley, and wheat. I was so profoundly impressed with this journey, that I wrote a poem called, 'Into the West,' the first draft of which was as follows:

"I laugh as I ride  
On my green prairies wide,  
I exalt and am glad  
In the might of the steam.

"Like an eagle on wing  
I swoop and swing.  
I shout and am mad  
With a wild sweet pain  
To meet the plain."<sup>177</sup>

But the contrast between the beauty of nature and the squalor of the dwellings struck him forcibly.

"I could not but observe the lack of the esthetic of all the homes of the western farmers. Not a suggestion that there is something higher than mere utility. The house a bare box, with hardly a curved line. A miserable square structure of the conventional carpenter's type. It was not a question of expense. The same money put into the right

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175. MS. Notes, Chapter 2, no p. Cf. A Son of the Middle Border, 353-354; Roadside Meetings, 110-3.

176. A Son of the Middle Border, 355.

177. MS. Notebook, dated 1887.

form of dwelling, would furnish the same room and it might be beautiful. The trouble is they are not educated in these things, and their surroundings are made prosaic. I was struck as never before by the boundless wealth of natural benefits. Rich and fertile plains that seem inexhaustible and not half tilled. . . .<sup>178</sup>

"The lack of color, of charm in the lives of the people anguished me. I wondered why I had never before perceived the futility of woman's life on a farm.

"I asked myself, 'Why have these stern facts never been put into our literature as they have been used in Russia and in England? Why has this land no story-tellers like those who have made Massachusetts and New Hampshire illustrious?'<sup>179</sup>

As Hamlin Garland visited his old friends and neighbors, he resolved to be their voice in literature. He would write fiction, as Kirkland had warmly urged him to do.

"All the way across Iowa I pondered the problem. 'Can I move on into the short-story field? Can I put the life of Wisconsin and Iowa into fiction as Eggleston has done for Indiana and as Kirkland is doing for Illinois? Miss Wilkins and Sarah Orne Jewett are recording the life of New England by means of the short-story. Why can not I do something of the same sort for Wisconsin?'<sup>180</sup>

At his parents' home in Dakota "the daily life of the farm now assumed literary significance" in his mind.<sup>181</sup>

He later put his feeling into a poem called "Settlers":

"Yet still they strive! I see them rise  
At dawn-light, going forth to toil:  
The same salt sweat has filled my eyes,  
My feet have trod the self-same soil  
Behind the snarling plow."<sup>182</sup>

In Roadside Meetings Garland states that he wrote his first

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178. Ibid., cf. A Son of the Middle Border, 355-356.

179. A Son of the Middle Border, 356.

180. Roadside Meetings, 112-113.

181. A Son of the Middle Border, 371.

182. Published in Prairie Songs, Chicago, 1893, 31; quoted in Prairie Folks, Chicago, 1893, 6.

important story, "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" (later to appear in Main-Travelled Roads) during this visit on the Dakota farm.<sup>183</sup> This is doubtful. The work mentioned in the MS. notes, dated 1887, is "The Rise of Boomtown," an amateurish novel which has never appeared in print.<sup>184</sup> "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" was probably written on his second journey to the West the next year.<sup>185</sup>

According to one of the 1887 notebooks, Garland attended a circus at Osage. Afterwards he set down his impressions in a little article evidently intended for a newspaper or magazine. The fragmentary manuscript of "The Professor at the Circus" affords a sample of his writing at that time:

"There are a large number of people who go to the circus and after, feel ashamed of it. The writer of this article is not of that class on the contrary he goes and glories in the going and after writes an article to the newspaper proclaiming his monstrous moral degeneracy.

"It may be proper to add that the writer is a man of letters who spends his whole time indeed in poring over books or bending above a desk. Therefore when a friend proposed going to the circus, the professor aforesaid agreed at once upon the other proposing to pay, and they set out conversing on the way about the old time circus and the joy 'we boys' took in its coming. 'How we used to count the days till it came,' said he. 'It was in June, usually, just at the time when we were busy in the corn-field. Do you remember how we carried the gorgeous show-bill out into the field and pored over its unparalleled magnificence of promises?'

"I should say so. And then when the day actually came and dressed in our best and seated on the straw in the

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183. Roadside Meetings, 115.

184. The manuscript is in his file marked "Unpublished."

185. Infra., 89. Garland gives the impression that he finished the story soon and sent it to Harper's Weekly. See Roadside Meetings, 115-116. His 1888 MS. notebook records that he sold this story to Harper's Weekly on October 16 of that year.

back end of the wagon box we jounced up and down on the way toward the town on the prairie where the 'Unparalleled and Unapproachable London and American Monstrous Marvel of Majestic Magnificence' was located. How we strained our eyes to the front to catch first view of the great tent with its banners flying! . . . "186

If the actual literary results of the first return West were meager, the impetus which Garland received towards the deepening of his social consciousness was important. It has already been noted that he was shocked by the appalling ugliness of the human dwelling on the plains and prairies. But his feeling became more personal, more intimate, as he saw the plight of his neighbors and kinsmen.

"The hard, crooked fingers, which they laid in my palm completed the sorrowful impression which their faces had made upon me. A twinge of pain went through my heart as I looked into their dim eyes and studied their heavy knuckles. I thought of the hand of Edwin Booth, of the flower-like palm of Helena Modjeska, of the subtle touch of Inness, and I said, 'Is it not time that the human hand ceased to be primarily a bludgeon for hammering a bare living out of the earth? Nature all bountiful, indiscriminating, would, under justice, make such toil unnecessary.' My heart burned with indignation."<sup>187</sup> With William Morris and Henry George I exclaimed, 'Nature is not to blame. Man's laws are to blame, '---but of this I said nothing at the time--at least not to men like Babcock and Fraser."<sup>188</sup>

Such a feeling was becoming vocal among the farmers themselves. The "agrarian revolt" was gaining headway, and in the very year of Garland's visit, a farm journal stated the grievances of the workers in the soil:

"There is something radically wrong in our industrial system. There is a screw loose. The wheels have dropped out of balance. The railroads have never been so prosperous,

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186. MS. entitled "The Professor at the Circus," dated 1887. The manuscript breaks off at the word "flying." Garland's own punctuation is followed throughout this transcription.

187. Italics mine.

188. A Son of the Middle Border, 363.

and yet agriculture languishes. The banks have never done a better or more profitable business, and yet agriculture languishes. Manufacturing enterprises never made more money or were in a more flourishing condition and yet agriculture languishes! Towns and cities flourish and 'boom' and grow and 'boom', and yet agriculture languishes. Salaries and fees were never so temptingly high and desirable, and yet agriculture languishes."<sup>189</sup>

It was against this situation that Hamlin Garland directed his indignation. Returning east he heard Henry George speak and shortly thereafter joined the "Anti-Poverty Brigade," haranguing a crowd in the old Horticultural Building on the theory of the Single Tax.<sup>190</sup> That was probably in November, for it was late that month that Joseph E. Chamberlin wrote Garland concerning an account published in Chamberlin's "The Listener" column in the Transcript.<sup>191</sup>

It was from Howells that Garland acquired his first interest in the writings of Leo Tolstoy,<sup>192</sup> an interest which increased as the younger man learned of the great Russian's agreement with Henry George's land reform theories.<sup>193</sup>

As time passed, Garland tried to convert the author of The Rise of Silas Lapham to the Georgist viewpoint. Though Howells portrayed a Single Taxer in the lawyer Putney of The Quality of Mercy (1892) and put the doctrine into the mouth of Mrs. Camp in A Traveller from Altruria (1894), he did not become a Georgist.

189. Progressive Farmer (Raleigh), April 28, 1887. Quoted in John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, Minneapolis, 1931, 54.

190. A Son of the Middle Border, 378-380.

191. The letter is dated November 29, 1887. Cf. A Son of the Middle Border, 380-381.

192. MS. essay "The Reformer Tolstoy."

193. A Son of the Middle Border, 389. See also Walter Fuller Taylor, "On The Origin of Howells' Interest in Economic Reform," American Literature, II, March, 1930, 10.

He was interested, but not convinced.<sup>194</sup>

Meanwhile, the friendship between Garland and Kirkland was deepening. On July 30, 1887, the Chicago novelist-lawyer wrote:<sup>195</sup>

"JOSEPH KIRKLAND  
Attorney at Law  
828 Opera House, Chicago. 30 July 1887

"My dear Garland:

"I was glad to hear from you by your interesting letter of the 25th inst. Your observation of farm life so far toward the frontier, especially in harvest - time must be very valuable. The next thing is to be 'bold, vigorous and faithful' (as they used to say in bestowing the accolade of knighthood) to write it in truth and in sentimental perception. I do not like your title 'Boomtown. A Social Study.' Our fiction is a social study, but we must conceal the study part. You might as well call it an essay, and so damn it at once. And if as I fear, your study of the subject is perceptible in your treatment of it, you must write it all over again to eliminate self and make your characters seem to act and talk with perfect spontaneity. The 'art to conceal art' is the one indispensable thing in realism. Of course you have to throw light on your theme, but you must fool the reader with the idea that the light shines from within it, outward. (Excuse this excathedra announcement from a man of one book, like me!) I think that so good a critic as yourself would gain greatly by laying by your book until it was partly forgotten then reading it to find fault.

"I am greatly pleased with your parents' appreciation of Zury! 'Real life' is it? Well, I tried to be utterly docile, to put in nothing of myself - simply to watch and listen to my characters.

"As to my new book, it grows with dreadful slowness! My people say and do but little of an evening, and when they are silent and inactive I take care not to fill up the space with Kirkland's thoughts.

"No, I didn't see that interview with Howells in the Tribune. If you have it, I should like to read it. I could

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194. Taylor, loc. cit.

195. Garland's letters to Kirkland, if they still exist, have not come to light. Those from Kirkland to Garland are in the latter's files.



save it to return to you. I think Howells very great.

"I have asked Milward Adams about the possibilities of lecturing in Chicago. He is the most experienced manager I know. He is the manager of the Thomas Concerts and of the immensely successful lectures of that charlatan traveler - what's his name - stereopticon views you know of Paris - Egypt, etc.

"Well, Adams says that is the only thing that pays now. Lecturing, pure and simple, is 'played out' in great cities, Chicago among the rest, or rather, more than the rest. Folks are otherwise occupied. Ingersoll can draw. Mathew Arnold could not. Made a dead failure. Still I am keeping my eyes open. When you come, I will introduce you to Adams. You must come to my house - my family will be at home then. The people don't want any 'message of hope', because they do not know how much they ought to be dissatisfied with things as they are, intellectually. They are wild for money but contented with their present stock of better things. The first thing to be done in offering folk a Gospel is to convince them they are perishing for want of it. Chicago says 'Go along with your old ark! 'Taint going to be much of a shower!'

"Yours faithfully,

"J. Kirkland."

He wrote to Mary E. Wilkins on November 15 praising her stories of New England and making a number of inquiries concerning her art. Her reply follows:

"Randolph, Mass.  
23rd Nov. '87.

"Mr. Garland:

"Your letter of Nov. 15th came to hand, forwarded by Harper & Bros. the other day.

"I shall be very happy to answer your questions as far as I am able. You ask me whether I am trying to depict characters and incidents of the present time or of any particular region, or whether I wish to deal with the past New England life. Well, I suppose I do not know. I have a fancy that I can myself discover my own aims better from my own work, than in any other way. I have never thought of it before, but I suppose I should as soon write about one time and one class of people as another, provided they appealed to my artistic sense, and I knew enough about them. So far I have written about the things of which I knew the most, if I should ever be equally conversant with other

subjects I do not see why I should not write about them. So much for your first question.

"Next you ask if the idea of being true is always present with me. I can answer quite positively to that and I think it is possibly the only question concerning which I could be quite positive. Yes, I do think more of making my characters true and having them say and do just the things they would say and do, than of anything else, and that is the only aim in literature of which I have been really conscious myself. Not that I am always successful in pursuing it, one can't always tell what true is.

"I thank you very much for speaking so kindly of my book, and I feel that you pay me a compliment in wishing to mention me in your lectures. Only I cannot feel that I have done enough good work to merit such notice. If I had written a really great novel it would have been different, but I have written only a few short stories, and it seems almost as if I were imposing upon people, when they say so much. I wish I had something beside this little collection of short stories, for you to speak about.

"I was perfectly willing to answer your questions, but fear I have not done so satisfactorily, with regard to the first one.

"I read your circular, and I should think you were undertaking a very extensive and interesting work. Please accept my best wishes for its success.

"I am very sincerely yours,

"Mary E. Wilkins."

### The Creative Writer Emerges

On February 3, 1888, Harper and Brothers sent Garland a check for thirty dollars in payment for "Holding Down a Claim in a Blizzard," which had been published in Harper's Weekly on January 28. Though not a short-story, it is a semi-fictional sketch told in a fashion reminiscent of Hawthorne. There are dramatic moments in this narrative of three men pitted against the furies of a Dakota storm in winter. But the descriptive passages are of such artistic merit that they presage Garland of the next decade.

For example:

"I lifted my head and took a look at the northwestern sky; then said, 'Boys, we're in for it sure'.

"And we were; for, borne on the wing of the north wind, a great fleecy dome of cloud, slaty blue below and silver white above, was rising, vast, wide as the northern horizon, seamless, dim, and noiseless, sweeping with the speed of a shadow upon us. The day was yet brilliant, but the frost-white edge of the cloud had already slid across the face of the sun, making the depth of the dark blue dome the more ominous and stern. . . ."

The storm on the prairie grew worse.

"It was a fearful scene. As far as the eye could penetrate, the stability of the prairie seemed changed to the furious lashings of a foam-like waste of waters. Great waves of snow met, shifted, spread, raced like wolves, joined again, rose, buffeted each other till puffs of fine snow sprang into the air like spray, only to fall and melt in the sliding streams. All was unreal, ghastly. . . ."

The scene on the next day gives the writer an opportunity for drawing a contrast.

"There was no receding swell upon this ocean, as upon the Atlantic; on the contrary, it looked so marble-like and still that one could hardly imagine its ever being moved again. The brilliant sun flashed from millions of ice-points on the snow, making a broad way of dazzling gold and diamonds--a royal way for the coming of the morning."<sup>196</sup>

This was Garland's first appearance in an important magazine of national circulation. It is significant that the little story reflected his personal experiences on the plains, for the best of his work in the years to come were to be similarly reminiscent.

On January 15, Howells wrote:

"Dear Mr. Garland---

"I am glad to have your letter and to know what you are doing and intending. Your time must come for recognition,

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196. Harper's Weekly, XXXII, January 28, 1888, 66-67.

but you are already a power, and that is more than a name, which is sometimes a hindrance to full use of one's strength.

"I'm interested by what you say of the drama and if you can fit your character play to some character actor, you'll succeed. But I'm still more interested by what I will call your appeal to me. . . ."197

The play is the one which he called Under the Wheel.<sup>198</sup> (In an MS. notebook of 1888, Garland outlines the plot of this play.)

But if Garland's fortunes, as judged by his interesting people of importance, were on the upgrade, those of his friend Babcock, still on the prairies, presented a sharp contrast. The youth in Jamaica Plain must have taken renewed satisfaction in having escaped from the Border when he read the following letter, a singularly human picture, from his old classmate:

"Osage May 8, 1888

"My dear friend:

"I suppose you are very busy as usual. Your profession is one that does not admit of much leisure. I shall expect to hear good reports from your special course of lectures.

"I have not been in town for a long time. . . .I am still staying home, times are dull! dull! dull!! I have not made up my mind yet what to do but must do so soon. I have not let anyone know that I was thinking of giving up the ministry yet, but I feel that I have gone as far in the matter as I can. I have not the privilege of a school now and if I go on farther I must do so by independent study. This I am in no situation to do. My folks cannot help me any. I have now been at home for most a year and have not been able to make my living. . . .

"My present situation is a rather trying one. I do not feel really as though I ought to give up the ministry, yet I am not sure but I can make a better success at something else.

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197. From the original letter. It is quoted in full in Mildred Howells, Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, I, 407.

198. Infra., 108.

"You mentioned Miss Eva Kelly in your letter. I have not seen her for years. I suppose she is a nice young lady by this time and possesses many accomplishments. I should enjoy to call on her of course but then I am not acquainted with any of the members of the family and would not be justified in doing so. I have not made any attempt to meet the young people of Osage. I made a 'mash' on a school-mom from St. Ansgor while at the institute and was seen walking out with her most every day. She is a doctor's daughter and a nice little girl. I only went with her to let the Osagers know that I could 'flirt' a little if I took a notion. . . .

"I do not think the girls at Osage care a snap for me. I have neither property or a profession. The girls you know are shy of farmers. They do not mean to get tied up to them. . . .

"Times are rather dull for me here. I must have a change as soon as possible.

"Truly your friend

"Burton Babcock."

Kirkland, after seeing the sketch in Harper's Weekly and several of Garland's poems and prose writings in manuscript warned him:

". . . As to your 'occasional work'; I think that is good; but that you are rather easily satisfied. You don't keep a thing revolving in your mind until some sharp, striking thought, dramatic or pathetic or humorous, starts into being, to compel the attention of the whole world. . . ."199

Early in the year Garland offered his services to the chief of the Single Tax hosts, Henry George. To this offer the great humanitarian replied:

"Prof. Hamlin Garland

"My dear Sir:

"I think the most effective way of putting your proposition before our people would be to have some of your

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199. Letter to Garland, dated February 13, 1888.

Boston folks--the more prominent in the movement the better--write a letter to the Standard, saying something about yourself and declaring your willingness to do as you propose. We should not only be glad to publish that but an advertisement to that effect if you wish it. Both should state, of course, where communications from our friends desiring to have you, should be addressed.

"Perhaps the officers of the Anti Poverty Society or whatever other organization you have in Boston would receive the letters and make arrangements. I am satisfied that you will find quite a demand in New England for your services; our trouble is the want of speakers.

"I recommend this course as the most effective, but if you do not prefer it, will make the direct announcement.

"Yours very truly,

"Henry George"200

Garland's notebooks, however, fail to record his speaking on the Single Tax in this year. According to the evidence he was continuing to give his lectures on American literature and American thought, on Shakespeare and Booth, on Hugo and on the German novel.201

That his interests were not primarily in economic or political questions is shown in his list of "Books to Be Read at Once" in the 1888 MS. notes:

"Ibsen's book of dramas.  
Robert Elsemere [sic] Mrs. Ward.  
Story of an African Farm. Schriener [sic].  
Len Ganttt. Opie Read.  
Emerson by Emerson.  
Poems of Jones Very.  
Poems of Ellery Channing.  
Poems of Paul Hayne.  
Wagner on Conducting."

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200. Henry George, unpublished letter, dated March 19, 1888. From Hamlin Garland's files.

201. Printed announcement of Garland's lectures, "1888-9."

On the next page are "Books to Buy." These include:

"Epic Songs of Russia--Hapgood.  
Zola's Experimental Novel.  
Bjornson.  
Turgeneff.  
Hugo."

It must have been at about this time that Garland became interested in the writings of Valdes, who was one of Howells "enthusiasms." On the back cover of the 1888 notebook is the name of the Spanish novelist and his address, "Oviedo, Spain."

Although Garland makes no mention of a journey to the West in this year, there is evidence for it. In the first place, he received a letter from his old classmate, Babcock, dated June 14, 1888, saying:

"I am greatly rejoiced to learn that you are coming back here to visit us and to give us a [sic] benefit of a lecture. . . . Every one spoke well of your lecture who heard you last June and I think you will have a full house this time."202

Evidently the start from Boston was delayed, for Garland's mother wrote him:

"Ordway, Dak., June 1, 1888.

"Dear H. Yours just at hand. I am disappointed. I was looking for you to start about Monday and you would be here in two weeks. I hope Frank will be able to come too some time this summer if he does not come when you do it makes me lonesome to think of his staying there alone but I presume he does not feel lonesome with that Beacon Street girl we are all well but me I have a dizzy spell am some better this morn we like your last Poem pa says it is real life. . . . we had a short letter from Rachel she says she is very proud of her nephews you must come prepared to give a Treat when you get home either here or at Aberdeen

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202. From the original in Mr. Garland's files.

I don't suppose we could get a crowd large enough to pay you very well but everybody says you must do some thing when you come how long can you stay when you come we wont rush you in the harvest field this year we are saving a pig to eat when you come and a veal so you wont have to eat Fessons old Beef I am mad yet. . . Jessie gives a Birthday Party tuesday eve to about a dozen of her friends so you ought to be here then did you know I was fifty years old last April. O I am growing old and ugly like all old folks --Some are not through seeding yet Mr. Harvey (Hawes) was not down last Monday we are going to sow some millet yet tomorrow for my poultry for I have fiteen chickens and three Ducks you can have some Duck when you come I will have to close for Pa is going to town so good by

"Your Mother"203

It is possible that this was the visit on which Dr. Cross, his Boston benefactor, accompanied Garland.<sup>204</sup> In a letter to Garland dated July 7, 1888, Kirkland writes from Chicago:

"I'm sorry Dr. Cross didn't honor us with a call. All are well at our house. Miss Welsch is still disturbed in spirit over your nihilism."

There is another point on which one is compelled to disagree with Garland's chronology. In his published records the author relates "Mrs. Ripley's Trip," to his 1887 visit.<sup>205</sup> A search of his notebook for that year fails to reveal any reference to this story, whereas the 1888 record informs us that on October 16 he sold Mrs. Ripley's Trip" to Harper's Weekly for forty-five dollars.<sup>206</sup> The story appeared in the issue of November 24.<sup>207</sup>

203. From the original in Hamlin Garland's files.

204. See A Son of the Middle Border, 396-404. Garland here dates the trip 1889.

205. Roadside Meetings, 115. See *supra.*, 78 .

206. These facts are borne out by the original notice of acceptance from Harper and Brothers, dated November 20, 1888.

207. Vol. XXXII, 894-895. "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" was republished in Main-Travelled Roads, Boston, 1891.



It is the story of an elderly woman from "Yoark State" who, despite her husband's doubts and opposition, sets her mind upon a visit to her family home and accomplishes the journey. There is about it something of the piquant charm of Mary E. Wilkins's stories of resolute womanhood.

Different in aim and treatment from "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" is the work of which this note was evidently the germ:

"Write a story of a man who returned from Kansas and took an old farm and built it up--landlord reaping the results of all his toil."<sup>208</sup>

Out of this idea came "Under the Lion's Paw," one of the strong stories of social protest in our literature.<sup>209</sup> It remains the work most often chosen to represent its author in the anthologies.

#### The Literary Milieu

These first stories of Garland's typify the dominant trends of American fiction in the late 1880's and the early 1890's. In the first place, they are realistic in that they attempt to stay close to the observable facts, the probabilities of life. Under the leadership of Howells, a body of realistic fiction had already been produced in this country. Kirkland, Howe, Mark Twain, Mary E. Wilkins, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Harold Frederic are among the luminous names in this development.

A little manuscript has survived in which Hamlin Garland set forth at the time his impression of this movement in the

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208. MS. Notebook, "Weirs, 1888."

209. Published in Harper's Weekly, XXXIII, September, 1889, and republished in Main-Travelled Roads.

late 1880's. It reads:

"W. D. Howells--Realism.

"If the term local novelists be applied to modern school of writers represented by Mr. Howe in the Prairie West, Miss Murfree in the Tennessee Mountains, Cable in New Orleans, Eggleston in Indiana, etc, Mr. Howells may be said to be something more, both because of variety and extent of his observations and his incontestable superiority of workmanship. . . .

"Jamaica Plain  
Boston  
Mass."210

In writing stories which portrayed local scenes and local characters, Garland was launching with the tide. As Professor Pattee expresses it: "The 'eighties in the history of the American short story were ruled by the 'local colorists.' It was the period of dialect stories of small peculiar groups isolated and analyzed of unique local 'characters' presented primarily for exhibition."<sup>211</sup> Professor Boynton likewise stresses the importance of this provincial note in fiction. "The vital movement," he notes, "started with a fresh and vivid treatment of native American material, and it moved in a great sweeping curve from the West down past the Gulf, up through the southeastern states into New England, across to the Middle West, and back into the Ohio Valley until every part of the country was represented by its expositors."<sup>212</sup>

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210. MS., "Jamaica Plain, 1889."

211. Fred Lewis Pattee, The Development of the American Short Story, New York, 1923, 268.

212. Percy H. Boynton, A History of American Literature, New York, 1919, 412.

Furthermore, Garland's early stories exemplify the trend of "social protest" in the fiction of the late 1880's. Professor Oscar Cargill in his book, The Social Revolt: 1888-1914, though admitting that men like Sidney Lanier, Henry Adams, and John Hay had criticized existing conditions before 1886, sets this year as the one in which the "revolt" began.<sup>213</sup> "The election of Harrison to the presidency, in 1888," he adds, "though a triumph for reaction, in no way proved a check to literary radicalism."<sup>214</sup> Garland's case supports this idea.

At this time Kirkland began to take a paternal interest in the literary progress of his friend. In letter after letter to Garland, the author of Zury wrote of technical matters both in poetry and prose. An example is the following discussion of one of the stories which became a part of Prairie Folks (1893):

"JOSEPH KIRKLAND  
Attorney at Law  
828 Opera House  
Chicago

"27 April 1888

"Hamlin Garland, Esq.  
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

"My dear Garland:

"'Daddy Deering' has greath strength -- glorious in its main characteristics. It reminds me of Tolstoi's wonderful horse story which finishes 'The Invaders' collection.

"Then it has what I call your faults. Subjectiveness amounting to egotism. You begin, not about Deering, but about yourself. 'I am perfectly certain'. . . 'So far as I know'. . . 'As I look back'. . . 'Iknew the old man'. . . My ideas of his personality'. . . 'I remember the first time I

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213. Cargill, The Social Revolt, 3.

214. Loc. cit.

saw him'. . . 'I, a mere lad'. . .--all these on one page and that the initial! An editor who began with that page would be apt to cry 'too bad to use'; while one who began in the middle would say 'too good to lose.' Everybody can be interested in Daddy Deering, but who cares whether or not your mind is working on the question why he was ever born at all?

"If I were you I would give up that damned typewriter that lends itself so awkwardly to revisions. On page nine, within seven consecutive lines, you use the phrase 'on such occasions' twice and 'on special occasions' once! Get a small page and a stub pen and work over your work and you'll thank me for these criticisms, small and captious though they (doubtless) appear to you now.

"Whether you allow it or not I am going to re-write that fine article and try it on 'America.' I fear they are yet too conventional to print a tale about hog-killing, but they shall at least have a chance to see what they ought to like. You are much nearer to Tolstoi than they are to his editors and appreciators.

"Yours ever

"J. Kirkland"

Two days later, on April 29, Kirkland again wrote:

"Oh you heedless cuss! To discover a gem like 'He paid his way' and then half ruin it in setting it! You begin with lines of three feet each--then occasionally slip into one of four feet--then before you get through settle down to whole stanzas of four footed verses some rhymed 1st and 3rd, some 3rd and 4th and some not and crowded feet at that! This is not genius; it is childish idleness--amateurish, slip-shoddity. It is like grammar-school compositions.

"I have rewritten it from beginning to end; giving it a commercial and literary value and sent it to 'America'; and I prophesy it will make you famous. As soon as you learn to do justice to the public you'll have a public, and not be standing on a lonely little bright, spouting good thoughts in poor words into vacancy.

"The style of Daddy Deering is execrable. How many times do you think you use the phrase 'the old man', in those 19 ms. pp. I counted 64 times and doubtless missed some! Sometimes the repetitions of the gag follow right along, and trip on each others heels. I venture to say you use the word 'old' 120 times in that short screed. Editors and critics won't stand such slovenliness.

"Part of it is due to your damned tyepwriter.

"Later. There; I gave a whole precious Sunday to re-writing Daddy D. I think it will pass as changed and shortened: it is good enough but perhaps the public is not. I think I'll not send it till 'Paid his way' has paved its way. Then we'll give it a trial. I've kept your ms. So that you can compare it with my reproduction and see how I have emasculated it.

"Yours truly

"Joseph Kirkland.

"Burlingame told me that Scribners Mag. receives 5,000 prose contributions of prose fiction a year out of which to select between 90 and 100!

"I fear that when papers all over the country go to copying 'Paid his Way' and crediting it to you everybody will say--'Let's see--Hamlin Garland--when is that published? Somewhere in Maine? Or is it a college paper?'"

### Early Dabbling in Verse

During all these years, Garland did not confine his writing to prose; he was also attempting to compose verse in odd moments. "I wrote poetry only when prose could not express my idea or feeling," he once told the present writer. Garland's early poems often express a nostalgia for the West. For example, consider the lines entitled "Dakota," which he began soon after going to Boston to live and completed in 1889:

#### I

"Land of a sea-like drift of plain,  
With hills on her western border-land,  
Where men delve under the rock-based fir,  
Eager to grasp at her golden sand;  
Seat of an empire, broad and free,  
With hights where the buffalo range at will,  
And peopled prairies where brave hearts thrill  
To the century's power and prophecy.

#### II

"I stood one day on a prairie hight  
And looked far out on a misty sea,  
Of mid-day grasses lying asleep,  
As silent as dim futurity.

No voice in all that wide careen  
 Of soundless surf and upflung swell  
 That broke a-bloom; no trace was seen  
 Of hand of man--no shadow fell.

"No sign of life save a shadowy wolf  
 Who sat like a sentinel still as stone;  
 Or sailing hawk whose shadow's flight  
 Was not more silent than his own.  
 Far away in the north a dim sun-lake  
 Lay silver-white; while down from the sky  
 That was blue as an eye and deep as the sea  
 Fell the unseen heron's echoing cry.

\* \* \*

### III

"I stood again on the self-same mound  
 Of swelling turf, three years between  
 And Lo! the land was a-hum with sound  
 Of men and of reapers as sickles keen  
 Swept into the drowsy headed wheat  
 With clatter and rush and jocund song;  
 While wide as a sea, green, yellow and brown,  
 The grain fields endlessly rolled along.

\* \* \*

"I felt the thrill of a nation's heart  
 As north and south and on to the seas  
 The railway trains shot to and fro  
 Like waves of blood in arteries;  
 And lightning lines in their subtlety  
 Ran here and there like sentient things,  
 To listen and tell in the settler's ear  
 The marvellous story the century sings.

### IV

"This is the work of the pioneer!  
 Leading the way for the world's advance,  
 The steel swung strong in his tireless  
 Hands,  
 Greater than heroes of old romance.  
 These are the works of the pioneers!  
 And this is the mighty march, whose beat  
 Is heard the whole sad earth around  
 Aye, this is the print of their marching  
 Feet!"<sup>215</sup>

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215. From the MS., dated in Garland's handwriting 1889. The crude original draft of the first part of the poem is to be found in the 1884-1885 MS. notes. Evidently the last part was written after the 1887 visit to Dakota.

Another poem, entitled "Homeward Bound," as yet unpublished, has a tantalizing biographical interest. Written in Boston evidently just before his departure for the West in 1887, the lines have an especial poignancy when read in comparison with the account of his unsuccessful love affair in A Son of the Middle Border.<sup>216</sup>

#### "HOMEWARD BOUND"

"How will she look to me after long waiting?  
What will she do when she first meets my eyes?  
Will she start - and smile - the curving lips parting?  
Will she reach up to kiss me, or look down with sighs?  
Now I am fearing her,  
Longing for, fearing the flame of her eyes!

"Seven long years since we parted in anger,  
Seven long years since that stormy goodbye -  
O, could I relive them - could I destroy them!  
Ah, God, the irrevocable years, how they fly!  
I chide as I ride  
The engine's slow stride,  
That bears me to Agnes, my sweet-heart, my bride!

"Will her cheek be as round, and the swell of her bosom  
Be borne with that passionate pride as of old?  
Will her lips be as pink, and the round wrist as lissome,  
Her hair the same glory of thick-threaded gold?  
I dream as I ride  
Through the dun night-tide,  
Of her eyes lambent beauty, her smiling lips' mold.

"From the drear naked hills and the lonely wide prairie,  
From a life with the brutes on the wide western plain,  
From the filth of the camp and the dearth of the herder,  
I return as a sailor from out of the main.  
All my pride humbled,  
My vain castles crumbled,  
I come back repenting, heart-aching with pain.

"What if I found you awaiting me, Agnes?  
Agnes my sweet one- my glory, my pride  
What if they lied who called you the faithless  
Life would begin again Agnes my bride.

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216. See pages 240-243; also supra., 31 .

I sing as I ride  
 To the engine's swift stride  
 Life would begin again, Agnes my bride!

"Hamlin Garland

"Boston 1887."

On the manuscript Garland has written: "The above lines were the original suggestion for the initial story 'A Branch Road' in Main-Travelled Roads."

Into verse he sometimes poured his social fervor, as in the lines called "The Reformer," which he began in 1885 and finished in 1889;<sup>217</sup>

#### "THE REFORMER

"His eye is aflame with desire  
 And hunger of light;  
 His voice has the note of a warning,  
 Sent wide in the night,  
 Where swarm the dumb victims of famine,  
 Blind martyrs of law and of might.

"His hand lifts a torch in the night-time;  
 As a star it is bright,  
 In the chill gray murk of the dawning  
 Its ray striketh white;  
 He turned his face to the sunrise;  
 His words, like trumpet-notes smite,

"With sorrow his heart is made heavy,  
 He thinks and is sad,  
 As with weight of the lash and red levy  
 Of gold to the glad,  
 In the midst of their toil in dark places  
 The poor of the earth are made mad.

"Then faint not, nor falter, O herald!  
 Though dull be the ear,  
 And leaden the sleep of the sluggard  
 And craven be fear!  
 Cry 'Judgment is come!' to the spoiler  
 To the toiler--'The sunburst is near!'"

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217. Dating on the original MS.



Sidney Lanier, James Whitcomb Riley, and Joaquin Miller were among the poets whom he read and enjoyed at this time. Undoubtedly they all affected his verse-writing.<sup>218</sup> But the greatest influence of all, both in poetic technique and in vital outlook, was Walt Whitman.<sup>219</sup>

Garland dates his first meeting with the poet of Leaves of Grass in October, 1888. The references to Garland in Traubel's With Walt Whitman in Camden begin in the notes of November of that year and the three postals from Whitman in Garland's files are dated Oct. 25, 1888; November 18, 1888; and Jan. 12, 1889.<sup>220</sup>

The meeting in the cluttered room of that almost squalid house on Mickle Street thrilled the disciple deeply, though at the same time it appalled him to think of the great poet's living in poverty. In a letter which Garland wrote to Whitman immediately thereafter, he put his sympathy and resentment into words:

"It is a shame that this man who gave the best years of his life and the very blood of his heart for the Northern soldier, and who did more to relieve the horrors of our Civil War hospitals than any other man, an angel of mercy to nearly a hundred thousand sick and dying men, should now in his age and weakness be lacking a cheerful home and the comforts of air and sunshine."<sup>221</sup>

In the Boston Transcript of November 15, 1888, Garland reviewed Whitman's November Boughs in such a way as to send the

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218. Roadside Meetings, 144-154, 207-240.

219. Ibid., 127.

220. The last two are published in chronological order, in Roadside Meetings, 141. The first card says: "Thanks for your kind letter--I have just sent off the booklet to Mr. H[owells] at Little Nahant--The doctor says I am perceptibly better (and I hope he talks true) Walt Whitman."

221. Roadside Meetings, 138.

Whitman coterie--Traubel, Kennedy, Bucke, and finally the old poet himself--into huzzas of delight and gratitude. Over and over again they discussed it.<sup>222</sup>

"Jamaica Plain, Nov. 16, 1888.

"Dear Mr. Whitman: I send a copy of The Transcript containing a notice of your work. It is not intended to be a study of an elaborate review but simply a good work which will allay if possible some of the antagonism which still exists toward your work. I shall do more of course but this little notice has its work to do. I sent copies to Mr. Howells and to Mr. Burroughs. I hope you are feeling as well as when you last wrote. I saw Judge Chamberlain and others of our friends to-day. Called on O'Reilly, but he was out. Hope to see him soon. I hope to do something specially useful for you by and bye. Baxter has returned from Europe. I shall see him in a day or two at his home.

"Steadfastly,

"Hamlin Garland."<sup>223</sup>

The review states, in part:

"It is an admirable book for those to read who wish to know Whitman, to discover how calm, patient and philosophical he really is. It is no longer in order to assault him, even if we do not agree with him, and the number of people who begin to understand and admire this great personality is increasing. As Stedman has said, 'Whitman cannot be skipped,' he must be studied by whomever would lay claim to the name of critic or student of American thought, and such person cannot do better than begin study by reading 'November Bought,' and especially the calm estimate which the author himself puts upon his work, in the initial essay 'O'er Travelled Roads.' . . .

"The admirers of Whitman (if I may be allowed to represent them) do not complain at the non-acceptance of his work as poetry, but they do complain, and have reason to complain, of the distortion of the poet's intention and the misrepresentation of his private life. I for one

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222. Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden, III, 114, 131, 136, 166-7.

223. Ibid., 114.

have no quarrel with any one who honestly objects to Whitman's being called a poet, but with those who raise the point (happily they are few now) that his intentions were not creditable, I certainly do take decided issue. . . .

"The poet's optimism can rise and does rise above pain and weariness and all besetting ills with a positive sublimity of mien. May he live to enjoy the ever-growing respect of the thinking men of his day."<sup>224</sup>

In Traubel's record for "Wednesday, November 21, 1888," we read:

"Garland discussed. Did Morse know him in Boston. 'I think not: he is a new man--has just lately come up: has his career yet to make.' He wondered whether Garland's friendliness was a 'permanency.' Then he pulled himself in. 'Perhaps it is not just to ask that: but with Garland it may be considered more or less of an experiment: it was a sudden move.' I pleaded: 'We can't say for sure: some people wake up suddenly, others by degrees: but the day is a fact to both of them.' He smiled: 'That is profoundly true--is to be considered.' He described Garland as 'still young, enthusiastic, bright--I may say, too, demonstrative.' But genuinely so? 'Oh! without a doubt: I never met a more earnest man: yes, he is genuine.'"<sup>225</sup>

Whitman sent Garland a copy of the Complete Poems and Prose, Philadelphia, 1888. On the following January 1, Traubel records a discussion of high importance for the purposes of this study:

"No letter from Garland yet saying what he thinks of the big book. W. said: 'I have had a note acknowledging--that is all. Garland is a very active man--a man determined to have his hand on things: you have never seen him?' Described Garland--depicted his 'earnestness.' 'Garland is one of the fellows determined to be in the fight: in manner he is extremely quiet: has a low voice--speech toned down, way down. He does not give you the impression of a belligerent man at all, yet in his writing he is very aggressive.' G. expressed 'polish, some little'--'then some little the college bred man,' but was 'genuine--full

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224. The Transcript, November 15, 1888. The ending of the review quoted in Roadside Meetings, 138-139, varies almost completely from the printed original.

225. With Walt Whitman in Camden, III, 147.

of conviction': 'this espousal of the single tax is a very good representative illustration of his mental daring--like-wise his Whitmanic endorsement and adhesion.' I said: 'A man can't be an upholder of W. W. and be altogether a man of peace.' W. laughingly: 'Not? Not? I suppose not.' Then: 'No one knows better than I do the difficulties that beset such a course.' I said: 'You seem to have hopes of Garland.' 'I do: yes: why shouldn't I? He seems started all right: is dead set for real things: is disposed to turn himself to the production of real results. Will he keep on or get discouraged by and by? So many of the fellows do go all right for awhile then suddenly stop--are arrested--develop no further--or go back, retreat: so many of them: the brilliant men particularly: those who have no faith--who have only cleverness: the smart fellows, the gaudy glittering showy men and women whose main idea in writing is to surprise, startle, transfix, the reader, instead of filtering into people gradually, subtly, by the mere force, vehemence, of an exalted faith. Garland looks like a man who is bound to last--to go on from very good to very much better: but you never can tell: there are so many dangers--so many ways for the innocent to be betrayed: in the clutter, clatter, crack of metropolitan ambitions, jealousies, bribes, so many ways for a man, unless he is a giant, unless he is possessed of brutal strength and independence--so many ways for him to go to the devil. I look for Garland to save himself from this fate."<sup>226</sup>

It is not difficult to see why Whitman was impressed by the young westerner who had come east to seek literary honors. The author of "Pioneers! O Pioneers" and "The Prairie States" would have a predilection for the son of a frontiersman. In 1870 Whitman had written: "Literature, strictly considered, has never recognized the People, and, whatever may be said, does not today."<sup>227</sup> When, less than twenty years later, he listened to Garland, fresh from two yearly trips to the discontented West, he must have found pleasure in this earnest son of the people, this man of toil, who would be, one might surmise, a voice for the

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226. Ibid., 437-438.

227. Prose Works, 216.

voiceless in literature.

On May 31, 1889, Garland again went to Camden, to attend the dinner in honor of Walt Whitman's seventieth birthday. He was invited to speak, but owing to the exigencies of the occasion his address was crowded out. His prepared speech, however, was published in Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman, under the heading "Hamlin Garland: Jamaica Plain, Mass., The Teacher." Among other things, Garland wrote:

"Walt Whitman has taught me many great and searching truths, but in the press there are two lifts of thought and feeling which rise so high they catch the eternal sunshine. These are, Optimism and Altruism--Hope for the future and Sympathy toward men. If I am right in the belief that I am a representative recipient, then I am right in saying that if Whitman had done no more than teach these great emotions--and live them in his life, which is better--he would be worthy of all the honor we can give him. For Walt Whitman's optimism is not the blind optimism of ignorant youth, but the jubilant flight of the stern-eyed poet, vaulting like the eagle over darkness and storms. He sees and has seen the failure, abortions, vices and diseases of our social life, and yet his sublime optimism spreads wings over them all . . .

"Walt Whitman is an absolute democrat. He knows no line of color, race or class. There is no nature so dwarfed and darkened, that he has not sung of its need, saying, 'This is a human soul and a brother, which of you are ready to condemn it?' Impartial as the sun which shines, generous as the ocean, his sympathy embraces all. This passion during the Civil war sent him, amid the horrible hospital scenes, to the heroic duties which struck him down in his middle prime of life. Greater love hath no man than this: he laid down his life for strangers. He could not fight men, but he could fight disease and face death with calm eyes. The value of this life and teaching is inconceivably great. . . .

"Praise too often builds monuments when it should build houses--raises tombs when it should have warmed hearts. Too often we neglect the living man and honor the dead poet. Praise for the hearing ear, I say--flowers of love for the throbbing sense--of the living man! I present my wreath of praise--drop my bit of laurel into

the still warm, firm hand of the singer, Walt Whitman victorious at seventy!"<sup>228</sup>

#### Expanding Acreage

"The first actual farmer in literature," as Kirkland had called him,<sup>229</sup> was broadening his fields and greatly widening the circle of his neighboring. Though "native American" art interested him primarily, he soon became a convert to Ibsen's drama, whose "The Doll's House" moved Garland more deeply even than did Shakespeare's plays.<sup>230</sup> Yet Garland was careful to admonish his friends against imitation of the great Norwegian. "We are not to imitate Ibsen. We must accept his theory, but do our own work in our own color."<sup>231</sup>

Early in 1889 he became acquainted with an actor-playwright and his wife, who exemplified the native drama. Mr. and Mrs. James A. Herne were in Boston playing in Drifting Apart, a homely domestic drama. Given tickets by his friend Hurd of the Transcript, Garland attended the play and was so profoundly affected that he wrote a surpassingly enthusiastic letter to Herne. "By such writings as that of the first and last acts of 'Drifting Apart'," he commented, "you have allied yourself with the best local-color fictionists of New England and deserve the encouragement and support of the same public."<sup>232</sup> Garland's account dates the beginning of

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228. Horace Traubel, ed., Camden's Compliment to Walt Whitman, Philadelphia, 1889, 40-42.

229. Roadside Meetings, 117.

230. Ibid., 65-66.

231. Ibid., 67. See also Hamlin Garland, "Ibsen as a Dramatist," The Arena, II, June, 1890, 82.

232. Roadside Meetings, 68.

his relationship with the Hernes as January, 1888.<sup>233</sup> The letter which Herne wrote in reply to Garland's laudatory words, however, is actually dated January 6, 1889. Herne was deeply grateful for Garland's encouragement:

"Your kindly conceived and earnestly written letter lies before me. I have read and re-read it, and each perusal has added strength to the already firm conviction I had in the ultimate success of the play--by success, I mean, that by which the managers measure--'financial' for be the play or players never so fine, where there is no draw--there are no open doors. Your letter demonstrates the fact that as you saw my work, others will see it also, not so readily, nor so clearly--but they will see it."<sup>234</sup>

The letter which inspired Herne's outburst of gratitude follows, in part:

"Dear Mr. Herne:

"I want to write and thank you for the very great pleasure I took in your play, 'Drifting Apart.' It was at once a surprise and an inspiration. A surprise to find such work done by a man whose very name was unfamiliar to me; an inspiration, because I said he is a product of the new spirit of truth. Perhaps, without knowing it, you are linked with the new school of genuine realists; not the realists of the tank-drama and the fire-engine, but the school of artists who are trying to depict the essentials of the life common to us all of to-day. There are, of course, minor things which I might criticise; but the entire play is so good, I am disposed to pass over them in silence, especially as they do not obscure the beauty of the whole. I want especially to say how much I admire . Katharine C. Herne as Mary Miller. The character of Mary Miller is a peculiarly sweet and lovable one, and Mrs. Herne's characterization of it has all the charm, the elusiveness, and the moving power of life itself. Critics can feel it, but find it difficult of analysis or description.

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233. Ibid., 67.

234. From the original letter in the Garland files. Roadside Meetings, 68-69, contains a fuller transcript of the letter.

I do not hesitate to call it one of the most remarkable pieces of acting I have ever seen. . . .

"Nothing that I have ever seen surpasses the infinite pathos of that slow, fascinated, unwilling, furtive, side-long glance at the dead child, a glance that tells she hopes it is asleep, yet fears the worst.

"And then the deep sigh of relief which follows, and the faint smile around the sad mouth, as she looks at the placid face and thinks it asleep. What action!

"And what poignancy of fear and despair was put into that single, low, thrilling cry. 'Margaret!' And what meaning in the relaxation which lets the body fall, while the face was uplifted as if to follow the little soul in its flight, and as she rose at length, and staggered to the door, a desperate resolution on her set and rigid face, I felt that the mother was charging her baby's death to the world. How significant to me was the covering up of the little form on the cot, the caressing touch with the doll, and the final sinking upon her knees, and burying her face on the little feet that could never move again.

"All these, and many other almost equally true expressions, made this one of the most piercingly and truly great pieces of acting I have ever seen. It is the work of an intellectual and gifted woman, as well as an actress; of a wife and mother, whose imagination leads her art, and whose art expresses her intellectual powers, and her fervent emotional apprehension of life.

"In such a moment, we feel what Valdés meant when he said, 'There are no trivial things, absolutely. Values are relative; that which is trivial to one, is a great fact to another; the death of a child, for example.' Such scenes will teach us sympathy with fathers and mothers of those babies dying, murdered, rather, in the crowded tenement houses. Never again will the death of a child be a trivial fact with me.

"The last act, opening with the sound of sleigh-bells, bringing back the sweet and wholesome life of Gloucester, was a splendid effect. Life flows on, though the individual suffers and dies. While tragedy is dwelling with Mary Hepburn, sleighing parties, with laugh and song, pass the door in the bright winter sunshine.

"Mrs. Herne, in this act, gives us again the tender, and naturally refined wife. Subdued, and anxious, but bravely facing the uncertain future. The same indefinable flavor, charm, which captivated me in the second act, is here; but made more rich and admirable by contrast with the grand



simplicity and reserve of the fourth act.

"And so this remarkable conception closes, with their future uncertain, but with a developed love and strength which seems prepared to meet anything. To how many a wife and mother must this drama carry hope, to how many men a warning?

"My dear Mr. Herne, I join one of the greatest critics of the day, and one of the greatest painters of the day, in saying, 'This is a great achievement.' You have done a service to American drama, and your wife has done a service to the new methods in acting, by demonstrating that by leaving effectism out of account, the greatest results follow. If I can serve you in any way, command me. I cannot give my service in a better art cause.

"Sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland."

"Some months later" Garland responded to Herne's cordial invitation to call, and a strong friendship flowered at once.<sup>235</sup> The charming Mrs. Herne entered into the discussions of the theories of Henry George and of Herbert Spencer. Soon Garland had converted the Hernes to the Single Tax.<sup>236</sup> "My happiest days in Boston," wrote the author in Roadside Meetings, "were spent with the Hernes."<sup>237</sup>

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235. Roadside Meetings, 69-70. The date of this call was probably late in April or early in May, for Herne's letter of invitation describing the route to his home is dated "April 28, 1889."

236. Ibid., 70. Miss Julie A. Herne (a daughter) in her "Biographical Note" to Katherine C. Herne's edition of James A. Herne, Shore Acres and Other Plays, New York, 1928, states: "It was Hamlin Garland who brought about Herne's conversion to the Single Tax, and his meeting with the great humanitarian, George. In common with all right-thinking people, Herne deplored the existence of poverty in a world of plenty, but not until he read 'Progress and Poverty' did he become convinced that there was a cure for this condition. He at once became a devoted disciple of Henry George, and, with the zeal of a crusader, he began to make public speeches in favor of the Single Tax. Those were the days when to be radical was anathema. Herne was implored by his managers to cease his speech-making as being 'bad for business.' But he ignored these warnings and continued his labor of love. . . ." xix.

237. Page 72.

Later in the year Garland wrote to the editor of The Literary World a letter entitled "Truth in the Drama."<sup>238</sup> In it he pleads for the kind of play which his good friends were presenting. Says the letter:

"A certain large class of our people are crying out for a 'genuine American play,' something quite aside from the conventional business of last wills, lost heirs, seductions, intrigue, and sensational clap-trap. I read in journals in Chicago, in St. Louis, in San Francisco, as well as in Boston and New York, these protests against the wearisome conventionalities of the English melodrama and the never-ending statement of intrigue--and yet all to no purpose apparently.

"It seems to me that if we are to have a new, life-like, and for that very reason American drama, we must unite to encourage those attempts which approach the truth, even if they do not reach perfection. . . .

"We should demand and encourage sincerity and truth in drama. Just now we are in the midst of a reign of fun--a large part of it good fun too--but we are in need of more serious studies. The Henrietta lacked this serious intent, and The Old Homestead, sweet and pure as it was, also lacked purpose and unity of plan. . . ."

Garland then tells of seeing Drifting Apart and of the tremendous impression it made on him.

"We have in a few scenes here as fine a type of American girl as has yet been seen on the stage.

"Now the point is, why should not the people who are clamoring for sincerity and originality in the drama give Mr. and Mrs. Herne the support they need and deserve, criticising carefully and kindly and praising when praise is due? So also with Mr. Cable's newly announced play, or Mr. Howard's, or Mr. Gillette's, soon to appear at the Museum. . . .

"And, above all, I plead for truth as a criterion. Is the play true, does it express American life? Does the plan unfold from the characters, and is the author, looking at life, special, definite facts of life, as the subject of his American drama? If any writer shall do this, he should be sure of our aid always, whether known or unknown, successful or a failure. We demand no set form for a drama,

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238. The Literary World, Vol. XX, September 14, 1889, 307-308.

but insist simply on truth and a certain gravity of intent."<sup>239</sup>

It was in 1889 that Garland completed two of his most important studies of the land question. One of them was "Under the Lion's Paw," the idea of which he had put into his notebook of a year before. This story was accepted by Harper's Weekly and published in September, 1889.<sup>240</sup> The other Georgist tract was Under the Wheel: A Modern Play in Six Scenes, copyrighted August 6, 1889.<sup>241</sup> It was first published in the Arena for July, 1890, and a few weeks later reprinted from the magazine plates by The Barta Press, Boston.<sup>242</sup> This was Garland's first book. Bound in pink paper, it was offered for sale at "twenty-five cents per copy; five copies to one address, one dollar."<sup>243</sup> The public was invited to send orders to "the Garland Brothers, No. 7, Beacon Street."<sup>244</sup> On the fly-leaves and covers are quoted favorable reviews from the Chicago Tribune, the New York Independent, the Omaha Herald, the Arena, and the London, England, Review of Reviews. Yet the book did not sell. "We had a few hundred copies printed and I tried to give them away," the author recalled.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, Mr. Garland has affirmed that Under the Wheel was never produced by a professional cast and, in all probability, never by non-professionals.<sup>246</sup>

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239. Loc. cit.

240. Garland's MS. notebook dated 1889.

241. No. 24100, Registry of Copyright, Library of Congress.

242. Roadside Meetings, 125.

243. From the outside cover, Under the Wheel, Boston, 1890.

244. This was the address of the Boston School of Oratory.

245. Roadside Meetings, 125.

246. Conversation with the writer of this study.

The play itself, amateurish and almost inept, need not long detain us.<sup>247</sup> But as a document reflecting the young author's convictions as well as the social issue which beset the late 1880's and the early 1890's this little work cannot well be ignored.

Jason Edwards, the father, is portrayed as the victim of unrelieved tragedy through the six scenes of the drama. In the author's mind this mechanic who turns farmer is evidently a symbol of the downtrodden, the man beaten to the ground in his struggle against man-made oppression, his battle against the monopolistic landlord, alike in the city tenement district and in the supposedly free lands of the West.

The depth of Jason's bitterness is augmented especially by his relationship to Alice, his sensitive and highly talented daughter, who typifies as Reeves, her lover, says "the modern woman." Torn amid her love for Reeves, her devotion to her music, and her determination to help her impoverished parents, Alice affords the playwright ample opportunity to paint in the darkest of pigments the injustice and cruelty of landlordism. In the opening scene Walter Reeves, a newspaper writer, proposes to Alice, who deftly refuses him, or rather, "puts him off."

"Alice (with enthusiasm). I love my music; I can't stop now just when I am beginning to master it. I must succeed in that first. I want to show people that I can earn my own living--"<sup>248</sup>

Alice Edwards, it should be noted, expresses views typical of those of the feminists in the Eighties and Nineties. Like thousands of her sisters, she is resolved to make a place for

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247. Garland novelized Under the Wheel as Jason Edwards: An Average Man, Boston, 1892.

248. Under the Wheel. The pages are not numbered.

herself in the world; she seeks equality with men. When Reeves persists in his offer of marriage, she rejoins:

"You got your place by your own work; I want to show how much I can do. . . .I'm proud of you because you got your place by merit; I'm going to see if I can't do something--"

To this Reeves, exemplifying the man's resentment of woman's encroaching powers, replies that he will "go home and write a ferocious article on the modern woman."

Garland's sympathies are markedly on the side of the feminists.

"I have also aimed," he tells us in the Preface,

"at setting forth in a modest way the growing desire of the modern woman to stand as an individual beside man. Alice Edwards, in a dim, searching way, is walking toward the light, as I see her. In rejecting charity and demanding justice she is voicing the expanding personality of the modern man and woman."<sup>249</sup>

The feminist note, however, receives by no means the chief emphasis. With all the power at his command the young author directs his protest against what he conceives to be the greater social evils of that day. It is Judge Balser, "land agent, attorney, boomer,"<sup>250</sup> who embodies what Garland held to be the chief of those evils, landlordism. Having enticed Jason Edwards (and others like him) to the West, Balser has clamped a mortgage on him as a means of easy income--the "unearned increment" of Henry George's outcry.

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249. *Ibid.*, n. p.

250. A "boomer" was a promoter who cornered a large tract of land for purposes of speculation and profit. Through advertising and other methods he attracted settlers to his land with wild promises of free farms near which towns and cities were ostensibly to be built. When the settlers arrived he fleeced them, and they soon learned that the boomer's promises were baseless.

At a significant point in the second scene (which is laid in "A Boomer's Den"---Balser's office) the judge and Frank Graham, an admirable character who favors the underprivileged, are talking of Edwards and another renter named Boyle.

"Judge (a little impatiently). Yes, I know, They're both cussin' the country, but what could they expect? Come out here expectin' t' find free land layin' around loose? A man can't start in a new country without money.

"Frank (significantly). Where can he start better?

"Judge (wheeling about in his swivel chair). That's nothin' t' do with it. As I told Boyle when I sold him his land, you c'n take y'r choice--go thirty miles from a railroad and get that free land you've heard about, or give me ten dollars an acre f'r mine. He took mine. It was his own choice. Same way with Edwards. A man ought 'o stand by himself.

"Frank (musingly). A man once jumped of his own choice into the sea--only the steamer was on fire--that's all. It was his choice."

In these speeches the underlying Single Tax preachment is apparent. We read in the brief "Author's Preface" to Under the Wheel:

"For eight years I have been growing steadily in the belief that I have heard the riddle of the Sphinx answered, not by one voice but by many. I have very definite beliefs as to the line of remedial action, but I do not insist on the infallibility of my belief. I simply say that I am satisfied that the destruction of all monopoly in land by a single government levy upon the social or site-value of the land is the heroic cure for most--if not all--of the disease and deformity of our social life.

"This I have suggested in my play and occasionally in my stories, never I hope to the great injury of their literary value. . . ."

At this time the foundation stones of Garland's literary creed were "that truth was a higher quality than beauty and that to spread the reign of justice should everywhere be the design and intent of

the artist.<sup>251</sup>

But even in the period of his most intense Georgist fervor, he longed for fame as a writer of fiction. "My reform notions," he tells us, "were subordinate to my desire to take honors as a novelist."<sup>252</sup>

His especial desires at the time were to be published in The Century Magazine and to make a success as a playwright. On September 7, 1889, he wrote to Richard Watson Gilder, the Century editor:

"I enclose a couple of western stories which I hope are suitable for your use. Will you kindly look them over at your earliest and if any changes will make them more acceptable be sure I will do all that is in reason. There may be some objection to the strong language--if so it can be easily softened down.

"I shall probably be in New York on the 16th--I aim at stating things just as they appear to me and as I lived that Dakota life it will be evident that I state it with considerable fidelity.

"Sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland,  
Jamaica Plain."

The stories referred to were "Ol' Pap's Flaxen" (a novelette later called "A Little Norsk") and "A Prairie Heroine."

Two other unpublished letters throw light on Garland's ambition to please Gilder:

"R. W. Gilder:

"Dear friend: In considering that 'addenda', [sic] please remember that I will revise it carefully--filling it out in

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251. A Son of the Middle Border, 374.

252. Ibid., 412.

detail--but the plan will remain about the same. I don't want you to misunderstand me. I like it, but it is a question whether it detracts from the value of the whole as a work of art. I don't know why the preceding part is not just as strong and artistic with this added--but if it does not appeal to you strongly don't use it. I wanted among other things to insist on the majesty and mystery of maternity--as Whitman does. To do a little toward de-vulgarizing it. Is it not worthy my art?--

"By the way for illustrations of such work Remington is the only man I know. I wish you could bring out 'Flaxen and Other Prairie Waifs' in book form during the year, with proper setting and illustrations.-- I am busy on another prairie story which promises well after much labor.--

"I was in despair [sic] and [illegible word] over 'The Doll Home'. [sic] [illegible word] over the astounding power despair over the future of my own dramatic work.

"Sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland.

"Oct. 2/89.  
Jamaica Plain  
Mass."

"Dear Mr. Gilder:

"All you say is very true--'Prairie Heroine' in some phases is a little too obviously preaching. My tendency is to present things concretely and let others find the preaching. I knew when I did that final section that it was a falling off from the artistic stand point--but I wanted to 'let the light in' as Walt Whitman asked me to do. I wanted to give hope, somehow.--

"But as far as the two first sections go they are artistic. They exalt me with pity, and resolution to help these toiling men and women. I aimed to show (not that free-trade was right, not that the single-tax was a panacea and right.) but to show that the whole condition of the average American farmer was wrong. Had I stopped there your criticisms would only have referred to minor points. As it is you are right.

"'Ol' Pap' I like. In the main it satisfied me. I can read it again and again and enjoy it as if it were written by someone else. (Mrs. Herne read it and was delighted with it--never tires of speaking of the men--'great simple types.')

Of course I will submit to any reasonable change, and I feel that you would require nothing unreasonable. I feel your appreciation very deeply.



"I thank you sincerely for your frankness as well as for your appreciation of the work I am trying to do.

"Sincerely Yours,

"Hamlin Garland

"Jamaica Plain  
Oct. 10/89

"I have planned a drama on 'Flaxen'. Do you think the public would receive such a drama from me with the same emotional comment and the same sincerity?

"H. G."

Gilder accepted "Ol' Pap's Flaxen," a Dakota Territory tale in which two bachelor claim-holders rear a charming little girl whose parents have perished in a blizzard.

The next month Garland wrote to Elizabeth Porter Gould:

"I am a little jubilant over a victory at the Century. They are much pleased with my work."<sup>253</sup>

It was shortly thereafter also that he wrote a "lofty letter" to his father in which he said, "If you want any money, let me know."<sup>254</sup>

On August 2, the Transcript again carried one of Garland's essays at the head of its editorial columns. Writing on "Carlyle as a Poet," he uses as his text the remark of James Russell Lowell: "With the gift of song, Carlyle would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer." Not being one to bow to authority, young Hamlin Garland contradicts the great Lowell and calls Carlyle "naturally a poet, a German poet."

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253. Letter dated "Jamaica Plain, November 11, 1889, in collection at the Boston Public Library. Miss Gould was the compiler of Gems from Walt Whitman, Philadelphia, 1889, and the author of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman, New York, 1900.

254. A Son of the Middle Border, 412.

Garland concludes:

"The more carefully we note the beautiful and varied forms of expression to be found in his passionate moods, we are forced to believe that Carlyle had the gift of song, and the greatest imagination of his time but fell a victim to the attempt to express thought without cant, and emotion without conventional forms. Like a rapt musical composer who has failed to master the players' technique, he clashes out confused chords, sometimes strangely sweet and sometimes grand and solemn, but forming no symphony, sounding no designedly proportioned phrase."

In the fall of this year Garland wrote to Henry George with reference to a guarantee for the land question lectures which Garland might give. George's reply was the type to discourage anyone but a zealot.

"Nov. 9/89

"My dear Professor:

"I return the letters. I am afraid you misunderstood me about the possibilities here. I cannot see any light on the matter of getting up the guarantee. The net result of the little meeting and talk about the matter was practically nothing.

"My advice would be to give up all hope of going ahead on the line of a single-tax guarantee, for the present at least--and see what you can do in some other line.

"I will be in Boston on the 20th and hope to see you.

"Yours

"Henry George"

After reading that letter, he probably resolved more than ever "to take honors as a novelist."

On January 10, 1890, Garland sent Gilder the manuscript of Under the Wheel, which the Century editor rejected and which, as already noted, Flower accepted for The Arena.

Some time early in 1890 Garland moved from the room at Dr.

Cross's in Seaverns Avenue, Jamaica Plain, and established himself with his brother at 12 Moreland Street in Roxbury.<sup>255</sup>

"With a few dollars in my pocket, I went so far as to buy a couple of pictures and a new book rack, the first property I had ever owned, and when, on that first night, we looked around upon our 'suite' we glowed with such exultant pride as only struggling youth can feel."<sup>256</sup>

In the first months of this year Garland submitted to Gilder a story entitled "A Girl in Modern Tyre." The letters exchanged with reference to this story have fortunately been preserved, part of them in the Garland files and part in the New York Public Library. They are presented here for the light they afford us on Garland's attitude as a fiction-writer.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT  
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE  
UNION SQUARE- NEW YORK

"March 31st, 1890.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"We have almost accepted 'A Girl in Modern Tyre', but I can't seem to make out its meaning at all. So here it is again! You say I will like it because of its 'purely artistic aim'; but after all I think I believe more in artistic treatment than in 'artistic aim', except that a person should aim to do a thing well that he undertakes to do at all.

"The story seems to have a special meaning, but what is it? Is it that the young man should not get married when half way through his college course, or that he should? Has he done a wrong thing or a right thing? You say 'his dreams'. Well--he dreams of going to Congress. Why shouldn't he be a teacher, a lawyer, a politician, a Congressman, in the town where he has made so good a start? There is no earthly reason why he should not that I can see. 'The sweet child-eyes' might call him away from college, possibly, but not

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255. In a letter dated May 1, 1890 to Miss Gould, Garland gives his address as 12 Moreland Street, Roxbury.

256. A Son of the Middle Border, 413.

from the career which would lead to Congress; and then I don't see why he shouldn't simply have postponed his marriage and gone through college. Nothing to hinder that if the girl is the right sort of a girl!

"Yours sincerely,

"R. W. Gilder."

Garland's undated reply shows his earnest desire to please

Gilder:

"My Dear Gilder:

"My story is a 'chunk o' life.' I don't know why he can't go to Congress--except that when love came to him it weakened him. He wasn't strong enough anyway to fight for such leading positions as the West offered.

"But the aim of the story is to set forth a common case of western ambition. A river lost in sands. Out of twenty fine fellows who started with me, fellows of equal or greater powers of grappling and holding, seventeen are settled as Albert Lohr is settled in those dead-and-alive western villages, as pettifogging lawyers, principals of schools, or shop-keepers. I saw fifty bright fellows (at the very least fifty) during my six years of Seminary life drop out and down as Albert did. Growing at length indifferent and in a way content with husks to fill their bellies. In a general way the story is a comment upon the all-pervading poverty and barrenness of western life. Specifically it is a presentation (in the best manner of the writer) of a bit of real life--of Albert Lohr, a typical case.

"Now I am ready to listen to suggestions. Can it be made fit for your uses by changes here and there? If you are free to say I shall be very very glad to consider. I know it must appeal to you. There are certain subtleties of treatment which I felt sure would reach you. Notably the handling of the boy in the last chapter and the character of Hartley--which my brother counts one of my best.

"In re-reading your letter I see one or two questions more. Why can't he become a Congressman, etc. He may but the chances are 'agin him.' Why didn't he postpone the marriage? Well, for one thing, he was acting under the impulse that makes run-a-way marriages sometimes. And second he saw that if he were to begin married life within a year, it would be worse than folly to leave the girl to struggle there alone, while he spent all the money he had and wasted a year in study which should be used in earning money.

"I'm afraid you don't know the drear hopelessness of a small country town, especially in the West, as well as I do. What he would be most likely to do would be to go West. Almost never would such a man look East.

"Let me have a further word with you.

"Sincerely

"Hamlin Garland

"I can easily put the ideas I have written you into the story in explanation.

"Oblige me with an early note, won't you?

"H. G."

"EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT  
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE  
UNION SQUARE-NEW YORK

"April 5th, 1890.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"I think if, without making the story too inartistically pointed, you could get in those ideas which you have expressed to me in your letter, it would dignify and make more useful the really very striking picture of life which you have presented. If you will do this and let me see the story again, I shall be greatly obliged to you.

"I must tell you what embarrasses me in stories of this sort. As you know, the newspaper press now-a-days is vulgarizing. It not only expresses the vulgarity of the American masses, but increases it,-that is to a large extent. Every decent man and woman including many newspaper men deprecates this condition of things. Now if we print too many stories which are full of the kind of language which should not be used, we seem to many persons to be continuing the work of vulgarization. On the other hand, we value correct pictures of life,- of even pretty common life--and the consequence is we are giving an undue proportion, possibly, of dialect fiction. People who are trying to bring up their children with refinement, and to keep their own and their children's language pure and clean, very naturally are jealous of the influence of the magazine,--especially of the Century Magazine,- in this respect. Here is really a predicament, and feeling that predicament, we at least think a dialect story,-especially of this kind, where 'yup' is used for yes, for instance, and where all sorts of vulgarisms occur,- should very strongly recommend itself before being sent into almost every cultivated household in the United States! Had you thought of

the matter in this connection? I am very far from wishing to go to an extreme in the other direction - lords and ladies - but I think we should not go to an extreme in this direction.

"Sincerely,

"R. W. Gilder

"Mr. Hamlin Garland,  
12 Moreland Street,  
Boston, Mass."

Garland's answer is undated:

"Dear Mr. Gilder:

"There is this saving clause about dialect (though parents may never think of it). It is usually spoken by one whom the child reading feels is illiterate and ~~not~~ to be copied. I believe in general that dialect does not corrupt a child so much as 'high-falutin language.' The child says to itself, 'This man talks funny. The writer knows he talks funny. I mustnt talk as he does.'

"Practically any one capable of reading my work would feel precisely this way. The only possible danger of corruption of language which could come from good dialect writing is in occasionally letting a really fine thoughtful fellow like Albert Lohr say 'Yup' for yes. But this I think you and I realize is not at all a great danger.

"Our great trouble today over 'corrupting' of the language of youth as you indicated in your note springs more from the infernal conglomerate, stilted, vulgar conventional 'newspaper English' which is not graphic, dignified nor characteristic. I think the language of the common people is beautiful, pictorial and splendidly dramatic beside it.

"I feel that we are not far apart on these things. I love the language of the farmer and the mechanic so swift sure and direct, but I loathe the reporter's diction and the diction of the country newspaper. I intend using it but in the way of ridicule, to help drive it out. However I feel the pressure which is brought to bear upon you on these lines, and I am perfectly willing to make compromises to make your predicament less vexatious. I feel that you would not ask me to sacrifice unnecessarily and I think you must know me well enough to know that everything I do has lift in it -- that I want to bring beauty and comfort and intelligence into the common American home. All I write or do has ~~that~~ underlying purpose.

"I shall therefore soften down the lingual sins of Albert. I don't think there is danger from the dialect of Hartley -- because they will see that he is not the principal personage, not the one having the author's complete sympathy. The other suggestions I will carry out and return the m.s. soon.

"Sincerely

"Hamlin Garland

"12 Moreland St.  
Roxbury  
Boston."

"EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT  
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE  
UNION SQUARE-NEW YORK

"May 7th, 1890.

"My dear Garland:

"Many thanks for your revision of 'A Girl in Modern Tyre'.

"I don't know that it is necessary to send back the copy, but I will tell you of some things which I hope you will consent to.

"(1.) Would you mind substituting, say, Grant's book for Blaine's. The name of Blaine brings up such violent and disagreeable controversies, and it runs all through the story.

"(2.) In the first part there are one or two places where the conversation is stretched out to an unnecessary extent, and I have struck them out. In sending the final proofs we can send you the copy too, showing you where it is. It is only in two places. The first omission occurs here:

'Over there' was the surly reply.

'How far?'

'Bout a mile.'

'A mile!'

'That's what 'a said, a mile'.

'Well, I'll be blanked!'

'Well y' better be doing something besides standing here, 'r y'll freeze t' death. I'd go over to the Arteeshun House an' go t' bed if I was in your fix'.

# # # # #

'The Artesian is owned by the railway, eh?'  
 'Yup'.  
 'And you're the clerk?'  
 'Yup. Nice little scheme aint it?'

"The part omitted is between the lines 'if I was in your fix' and 'The Arteeshun is owned by the railway, eh?' This omitted part is unnecessary and seems to me to weaken it; as, 'Well where is the Artesian House? etc.'

"In another place I have struck out some unnecessary conversation in the hotel on the lamp, beginning with 'Spit on it' to 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'. Plenty is left to keep the local color.

"(3.) You call one of the lamps 'horrible little'. Is not that too strong a word? Why not absurd little'.

"(4.) Again page 3, I have written Vanderbilt in the place of Jay Gould. Jay Gould is a live thief whom we would rather not honor, even in that way.

"Page 13, you say 'sat down at the organ and played a gospel hymn or two from the Moody and Sanky hymnal, infallibly in such homes'. The words 'infallibly in such homes' are unnecessary and weaken the statement. When you introduce a Moody and Sanky hymnal there you do it because it is 'infallible in such homes' and it seems to me inartistic to add the definite statement.

"(5.) Page 28, I can't make out this line. 'Hartley came in a few moments later and found Bert sitting thoughtfully by the fire with his coat and shoes off - evidently in deep abstraction'. 'We'll rag at away at last - much as ever.' What is this last line.

"(6.) Page 53, you say of Brann, 'The struggle had been prodigious, but he had snatched defeat out of victory'. You mean 'victory out of defeat' don't you? You add 'His better nature had conquered.'

"(7.) The story should end without the few last words, I think, because they are a repetition, and perhaps a little bit sordid too. It closes more naturally 'three pairs of sweet childish eyes held him prisoner - though a willing one'. I struck out the following: 'Certain of his dreams must ever remain dreams. Over his head the heights of wealth and power lift each year growing more inaccessible to him and all like him.' This idea is in just before, and its



repetition weakens the close.

"Sincerely

"R. W. Gilder

"Many thanks for your photograph. I see you sign it 'for single tax.' But are you not in favor of international copyright, the Sermon on the Mount, and summer vacations?"

Again Garland's reply bears no date.

"Dear Gilder:

"Your letter at hand. Glad the tale needs so little cutting. Criticisms accepted. 'Horrible little lamp' meant its odor. 'Horribly smelling' should be the words. Blaine's book seems unnecessary [sic] for the fun -- or at least it ought to be partisan. We can use any name we please. 'Thompson' or 'Smith's fifty years in Congress'. I didnt mean to be exact. There's such a delicious bit -- Hartley's giving such a book to Mrs. Welsh -- and proposing a morocco copy of same for Maud! It wants to be a book that some people wouldnt touch with tongs. I think we can get around that all right by some other name.

"Yes I believe in the Single-Tax and 'the Single-tax' with me means international copy-right, the Sermon on the Mount and Summer Vacations for everybody. But why didnt you send your photo. I want to have a presentment of the Editor who first measured my work.

"Sincerely yours.

"Hamlin Garland.

"12 Moreland St.  
Roxbury, Boston."

On September 6, 1890, the Garland brothers moved to another place in Roxbury, 9 Talman Place.<sup>257</sup>

In the account list for that month Hamlin Garland records that his "earnings for the last year were about \$1400."<sup>258</sup> Some idea of the prices current in those days are indicated in his records

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257. MS. notebook 1889.

258. Loc. cit.

of payments received for his stories and articles in the Arena.

"Arena.

"Ibsen -- accepted	--	\$50.
Prairie Heroine ac.	--	\$75.
Under the Wheel ac.	--	\$200.
Return of a Private ac.	--	\$100."259

Though eager to make a strong connection with one of the older literary magazines, Garland was exultant over his relationship with the Arena editor, as a letter to Herne indicates:

"9 Talman Place  
Roxbury, Mass.,  
November 21, 1890

"Dear Herne:

"Things is boomin' here. These Flowers are 'corkers.' I enclose a slip that explains itself. I've accepted the editorial department of a 'Single-tax Department.'--and so it goes! It means a lot of work for me but we must keep up our end of the whiffle-tree. Gods! Ain't we livin' in great days? This election has simply turned people loose. Wait till you come East again and you will feel it. The farmers are wild. The Democrats are getting bold as kittens and the devil's to pay--from the conservative standpoint.

"B. O. Flower and I are getting chums. He's one o' my kind. Don't smoke, chew, drink nor fool away his time. He's indefatigable. A tremendous worker. His last editorials (December Arena) are the most electrifying editorials ever printed as editorials of a magazine in America. He's concentrated moral purpose--

"And behind him stands that brother of his pouring out money wherever needed. By the great horn-spoons! I wish we had a few more such - You see his Roman hand in the enclosed of course-.

"I'm going to go west to listen mainly. To get my father to tell yarns with my hunter uncle. O, I'll make it pay, never fear.

"People seem all well out at Dorchester. I go out once or twice a week and discipline them for not doing some writing on single-tax. Mark my words these Flower bros. are going to be one of the great forces of this age. The Arena will print 30,000 copies as the first ed. this month. Nearly 3 times the circulation of the N. American Review--and twice the circulation of Forum and N. Am. Review put together -- and all inside a year. Do you wonder I'm enthusiastic?

"I must go to work--

"As ever

"Garland"

The trip to which he alludes in this letter was the one during which he gathered the notes for A Spoil of Office, which Flower published in six parts in The Arena, beginning in January, 1892, and later in the same year issued as a book. This journey west in 1891 may be regarded as a turning point in Hamlin Garland's career. Flower offered to pay the author's expenses and to compensate him for the serial besides.

"The price agreed upon would seem very small in these days of millionaire authors, but to me the terms of Flower's commission were nobly generous. They set me free. They gave me wings!--For the first time in my life I was able to travel in comfort. I would not only eat in the dining car, and sleep in the sleeping car, but I could go to a hotel at the end of my journey with a delightful sense of freedom from worry about the bills. Do you wonder that when I left Boston a week or two later, I did so with elation--with a sense of conquest?"<sup>260</sup>

Unfortunately, Garland's letters to The Arena editor, if they still exist, have not become available. Something of the interesting relationship between the two men, however, is shown in the following letters (from the Garland files) of Flower to Garland:

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260. A Son of the Middle Border, 423.

"THE ARENA  
PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Boston

"April 30, 1890.

"Hamlin Garland,  
Roxbury, Mass.

"My dear Sir:

"I have just finished reading your 'Prairie Heroine.' It is a delightful little sketch, although one feels something like Oliver Twist after finishing it, as if there should be another chapter. If satisfactory to you I will send you a check for seventy-five dollars for this story and I think the publication of it in the Arena would be of great benefit to you as we will slip the press of America, calling attention to the publication of the story two weeks before it appears and will also call special attention in our Notes and Comments.

"I return your poem which you also kindly left when you were in as I have quite a number of poems on hand at the present time.

"I notice you have seemed to suppress your thoughts in two or three instances and have erased some lines from your story. In writing for the Arena either stories or essays I wish you always to feel yourself thoroughly free to express any opinions you desire or to send home any lessons which you feel should be impressed upon the people. I for one do not believe in mincing matters when we are dealing with the great wrongs and evils of the day and the pitiful conditions of society and I do not wish you to feel in writing for the Arena at any time, the slightest constraint.

"Cordially yours,

"B. O. Flower  
per A."

"THE ARENA  
PUBLISHING CO.  
Boston

"May 3, 1890.

"Hamlin Garland,  
Roxbury, Mass.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"Your esteemed favor received and I forward your paper

to you today for changes which you wish to make. I shall enjoy your drama very much indeed and think it is highly probable that at sometime in the near future I may want that drama or another from your pen for the Arena. I have only as yet read three or four pages but am charmed with it. We are in perfect accord as to the needs of the present hour and I am also impressed with the fact that we must depend as much upon the drama and fiction as all other agencies combined in bringing about a higher civilization. There is nothing that so effectively carries home a lesson to the heart of the people as a realistic drama, conscientiously and ably acted, or a story true to life and strong in its moral emphasis.

"In regard to the price of your story I would say I should very much have liked to have offered you more and had the Arena been an old magazine, firmly established, I should have taken great pleasure in doing so. But while we are succeeding most admirably and above our expectations, for the first year or two it is necessary to husband our means as carefully as possible, owing to the fact that we are creating a constituency while the old reviews have a large constituency behind them and are also spending several thousand dollars every month in advertising. The North American Review I understand puts in about ten thousand dollars every month in advertising. This is the result of our starting the Arena, as before its advent they advertised but little excepting in the Autumn months. The Review especially, but the Forum also is manifesting a spirit of liberality that was not present in a marked degree before the Arena appeared. This is seen in the fact that previous to our publishing Laurence Gronlund and John Ransom Bridge's papers on Nationalism both those journals had I understand refused to give Socialism an opportunity of being heard. Since then they have changed their front.

"Cordially yours,

"B. O. Flower  
A."

"THE ARENA  
PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Boston

"May 5, 1890.

"Hamlin Garland,  
Roxbury, Mass.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"Your esteemed favor received and contents noted. I will carefully read your play through at my earliest con-

venience and will write you as soon as I have done so. I think it highly probable that I shall wish the play and in that event will publish it at once. From the few pages I have read I am greatly pleased with it.

"We must make the people acquainted with the world's miseries. I have often wished that there could be a society formed in Boston where each Sunday morning splendid music would make the entertainment very attractive for the people and especially the people in the poorer walks of life, where a short fifteen or twenty minutes' address could be delivered by some earnest, sympathetic orator and where in the evening a play such as I take your 'Under the Wheel' to be could be produced and the poor people, young and old could have the pleasure of seeing it without having to pay for it. That is, that each member of the society would be able to distribute tickets to five or ten or more persons that they have been able to find who are too poor to enjoy the theatre and such amusements and who could in this way be made happy while they were being stimulated to think and also brought in touch with the best sentiments of the day. It may be that this is Utopian, yet I firmly believe as Victor Hugo believed that nothing can educate the masses like the drama.

"I expect my wife home the latter part of this week from Washington and I hope in the course of a week or two to be sufficiently settled down to be able to have the pleasure of your company some evening, as I very much wish to become better acquainted with you, feeling that our interests, desires and aspirations are in perfect harmony.

"Cordially yours,

"B. O. Flower  
A."

"THE ARENA  
PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Boston

"Sept. 3, 1890.

"Hamlin Garland, Esq.,  
Roxbury, Mass.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"If you have a good photograph of yourself I should be very glad to receive it as I should like to use it for a frontispiece for an early number of the Arena. My wife and I read 'A Member of the Third House' until after ten o'clock last night although we did not quite finish it. We

became intensely absorbed in the same and only left off because the condition of my wife's health renders it imperative that she have as much sleep as possible. I think it is immense; one of the finest dramatic creations I have ever read. I am not, however, certain that you do not lay yourself and your publishers liable notwithstanding your preface, because you graphically portray so many individuals that will be readily recognized, then passing from that without changing your characters you picture individuals which in the first part of the play are well known personages as being criminals.

"Now there is no question in my mind nor in your mind for that matter I presume but what the last part of your play so far as it relates to Davis, Fox and Brennan is a great deal more realistic or approaches a great deal nearer the absolute facts of the case than the first part. Still at the same time it must be remembered they have covered up their tracks so well that it is impossible to prove any criminal charges against them. I think it would be a most wise thing to have the opinion of Attorney-general Waterman on the drama before it is published, as he would be able to speak I think authoritatively as to whether it would render you or the publishers in any way liable. I should like to have talked the matter over with one of our attorneys but one of the firms of attorneys who conduct business for us is Allen, Long and Hemmenway and you know Gov. Long was detained by the West End Road so that firm is out of the question; while E. A. Scott our other attorney has been State Senator for several years, belongs to the Republican machine, is very cautious and not in any way radical in his views. I am satisfied he would render an adverse opinion because he is very intimate with Tom Marsh and I do not think would want the question stirred at all.

"I think, however, that the Attorney-general would be able to speak in a thoroughly authoritative manner in regard to the same and his bias would be I think in our favor rather than on the other side.

"Cordially yours,

"B. O. Flower.  
A."

"THE ARENA  
PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Boston

"Sept. 16, 1890.

"My dear Mr. Garland:

"Enclosed I send you check for one hundred dollars for your paper 'The Return of a Private' which I trust will be promptly received. I will have the autograph you sent used instead of the other as you suggest. I wish you would give me data by which I can write up a short sketch of your life. If I have time I intend to incorporate it as an editorial note instead of using it as I usually do in our Notes and Comments. In the event that I have time to do so I wish to show that it is largely to the young men of the rising generation that we have to look for the great moral impetus which is to revolutionize the conditions of men and bring about a better civilization. The war of the rebellion and the agitation which preceded it engrossed the attention and brought out the moral energies of a class of grand men. After the war there seems to have been a breathing spell. Now other great problems have come before the people, but it is to the young men that we have to look for the triumphs of the future. If I can get the time to write the editorial note I wish to I think I can be of benefit to you while at the same time it may do good in the way of inspiring other young men to enter the ranks of the reformers.

"Cordially yours,

"B. O. Flower.  
A."

Seldom is a critical essay so self-revealing as Garland's article on "Mr. Howells's Latest Novels." The writer undoubtedly was thinking of his own situation when he said of The Minister's Charge:

"The most pathetic and moving figure in the book to one especially is himself a boy from the country, is the silent, grotesque, and infinitely sorrowful figure of Lemuel's mother. There is a genuine and characteristically American tragedy obscurely set forth in this book; I mean the inevitable and inexorable separation of parent and child, that comes with the entrance of the child upon wider and higher planes of thought and action. . . .To many



a man in the city the story of Lemuel Barker came with a directness that made the case his own."<sup>261</sup>

The younger man's comment on the changes he saw in the realist whom he admired is interesting and revealing:

"Fifteen years ago Mr. Howells was one of the novelists most favorably received by the general careless American public. He wrote charming and graceful stories and essays, and no one thought of assaulting him. He did not stand for progress, did not enunciate definite opinions, and the conservative public considered him delightful for summer reading. He amused the public. Fifteen years is a short time, but it has brought to the author of A Hazard of New Fortunes more changes mentally than fall the lot of most men during an entire lifetime. He has deepened and broadened, gathering sympathy and tenderness, and as a consequence his books have deepened in insight and broadened in humanity. The attention to style, the graceful turn of a phrase are there still, but they are only the scrolls of the column. The first need now is utterance; the form, although not less finished and faithful, has become secondary."<sup>262</sup>

It was Flower who interested Garland in psychic research, a study which became his lifelong passion.<sup>263</sup>

At about the same time Garland's interest in native American drama became intensified. In May, 1891, he saw the Hernes in a performance of Margaret Fleming in Chickering Hall, Boston. This was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the so-called "Little Theatres" in America. Largely at Garland's behest, a number of prominent persons attended the play, and out of the interest which it aroused came "The First Independent Theatre Association, a Society to Promote Dramatic Art in America." Garland

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261. The New England Magazine, (New Series) II, May, 1890, 245.

262. Ibid., 243.

263. Hamlin Garland, Forty Years of Psychic Research, New York, 1936, 1-3. See also David H. Dickason, The Contribution of B. O. Flower and the Arena to Critical Thought in America, Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1940, 167.

served as secretary of the Association. With the assistance of a committee consisting of Flower, Sylvester Baxter, Herne, Mildred Aldrich, Mary Shaw, W. A. Brownell, and one or two others, he drew up the Prospectus of the Association.

According to the Prospective, the objects of the organization were as follows:

"First and in general to encourage truth and progress in American Dramatic Art.

"Second, and specifically, to secure and maintain a stage whereon the best and most unconventional studies of modern life and distinctively of American life, may get a proper hearing. We believe the present poverty of Dramatic art in America is due to unfavorable conditions, rather than to a lack of play-writing talent, and it is the purpose of the Association to remove as far as possible, the commercial consideration and give the Dramatist the artistic atmosphere for his work, and bring to its production the most intelligent and sympathetic acting in America."<sup>264</sup>

Meanwhile, Garland lost no opportunity to spread Georgist propaganda among his friends and acquaintances. He frequently enclosed leaflets preaching the gospel of "Free trade, free land, free men!" Not all of his correspondents, however, reacted so favorably as did Whitman.<sup>265</sup> A letter from the gentle Mary Wilkins, for example, showed signs of opposition:

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264. From a copy of the original Prospectus in Hamlin Garland's files. Of this part of his career, Garland wrote: "With regard to my work in promoting the native drama, it is worthy of note, I think, that I drew up the first suggestion for an 'Independent Theater' in Boston, and that for nearly twenty years, I worked with Howells, Herne, and Brander Matthews, along these lines. By way of articles, lectures, and letters to the Transcript and other papers, I clamored for a drama that should be true to our way of life and be filled by characters of our place and time."--Hamlin Garland, letter to E. C. Hill, January 22, 1939, from Hollywood.

265. Of the foregoing slogan Traubel quotes the poet as saying, "That is grand!" With Walt Whitman in Camden, 110.

"Randolph, Mass.  
March 31st, 1891.

"My dear Mr. Garland,

"Thank you for your kind letter, and the chance to write my name on the list.<sup>266</sup> I only wish it had more weight in the matter.

"I am going away the twelfth of April, when I return I shall most certainly be pleased to have you call upon me. I am exceedingly hurried, and fear I can't avail myself of your kind invitation for the studio before I go away. I am very sorry.

"I've got to confess I have not read your pamphlet yet, but shall soon, but - I don't know anything about it yet however - I fear you can't count me, for I have some friends nearly ruined by land taxes now. But perhaps you do not mean to tax their swamps, unsalable house-lots and stumpy woodlands any more. I won't argue, until I know.

"Very sincerely yours -

"Mary E. Wilkins"

Miss Wilkins's next letter, avoiding all mention of economic questions, refers to her regret at not being able to "hear Margaret Fleming" and thanks Garland for his praise of her new book of stories A New England Nun.

"Randolph, Mass.  
May 20th 1891.

"Dear Mr. Garland,

"I thank you very much for your kind letter, and the card of which I hoped to make use, but fear I cannot, as I am fatigued with my sojourns in strange places, and find a lot of work ready for me here. You are very kind to speak of my New England Nun as you do, and I am so glad that you do not think it falls behind the other volume in worth.

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266. "The list" was evidently a roll of supporters for the Hernes's dramatic project.

"I am very sorry that I was unable to hear Margaret Fleming, it would have given me great pleasure I know.

"I shall be pleased to have you call at any time.

"Very truly yours,

"Mary E. Wilkins."

During two weeks in August, 1891, Garland gave his series of lectures on American literature at the Eighth Session of the Seaside Assembly at Avon-by-the-Sea, New Jersey.<sup>267</sup>

One of Garland's letters, evidently written in answer to a request for his picture to be used for advertising purposes, is characteristic:

"Dear Mr. Alberti:

"Nowadays the Boot and Shoe dealers and Plymouth Rock Pants Co. send out so many cuts of their clerks and drummers that it would be aristocratic in my case to hold off--however, being a democrat (of the revolutionary type) I ought not to object to a place among my fellows.

"Seriously I shrink from it a little but if you feel it would do us good enough to warrant wear and tear--why here's the block. On looking over the letter I find you want a photo. I send a late one therefore. Use it as you think wise always keeping in mind that I do not object to any dignified advertising; it's a sort of necessity as things to. I have no fears but you'll manage the whole affair properly.

"By the way, I wish you could manage me as a lecturer and reader of my own work.

"Sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland

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267. Letters of Hamlin Garland, dated January 25, 1891, January 30, 1891, 9 Talman Place, Roxbury; originals in New York State Library, Albany. The letter of W. M. Alberti, Secretary and Superintendent of Instruction, inviting Garland to the Assembly is in Garland's files.

"P. S. If you wish my cut to print from for any purpose I'll send it. If you do get out a circular could it be in such way that you might use it elsewhere if desired? H. G."

It was while lecturing at Avon-by-the-Sea that Garland first met Stephen Crane.<sup>268</sup> The account of this in Roadside Meetings reads as follows:

"Among other of my addresses was one upon 'The Local Novel,' and I remember very distinctly the young reporter for the Tribune who came up to me after the lecture to ask for the loan of my notes.

"He was slim, boyish, with sallow complexion, and light hair. His speech was singularly laconic. 'My name is Crane,' he said. 'Stephen Crane,' and later I was told that he had been a student in a school near by, but had left before graduating to become a newspaper writer in New York. As I recall it, his presence at Avon was due to the Albertis, who knew his family--anyhow, he was reporting for the assembly.

"Although not particularly impressed with him in this short interview, the correctness of his report of my lecture next day surprised me. I recognized in it unusual precision of expression and set about establishing a more intimate relationship. We met occasionally thereafter to 'pass ball,' and to discuss the science of pitching, the various theories which accounted for 'inshoots' and 'outdrops,' for he, like myself, had served as a pitcher and gloried in being able to confound the laws of astronomy by making a sphere alter its course in mid-air."<sup>269</sup>

#### Main-Travelled Roads

Since Garland kept no diary during 1891<sup>270</sup> and since the records in the Registry of Copyright are incomplete, the exact date of the publication of Main-Travelled Roads cannot be stated. Since the newspaper reviews of the book date from June 13,<sup>271</sup> evidently

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268. Roadside Meetings, 189.

269. Loc. cit.

270. A Son of the Middle Border, 423.

271. The earliest available review--that in the Chicago Tribune--appeared on that date; the New York Tribune review was published on June 28.

the book appeared late in May or (more probably) early in June. It bore the imprint of the Arena Company. The cloth-bound edition sold at one dollar and the paper copies at fifty cents.

Of B. O. Flower's support, Garland has commented:

"No editor ever worked harder to give his author a national reputation and the book sold, not as books sell now, but moderately, steadily, and being more widely read than sold, went far. This proved of course, that my readers were poor and could not afford to pay a dollar for a book, at least they didn't, and I got very little royalty from the sale. If I had any illusions about that they were soon dispelled. On the paper bound book I got five cents, on the cloth bound, ten. The sale was mainly in the fifty-cent edition."<sup>272</sup>

Garland has given a full statement of what he was endeavoring to do in Main-Travelled Roads. His aim mainly was to present a protest against romantic portrayals of the rural West. The mood of his writing is set forth in the almost lyrical Foreword:

"The main-travelled road in the West (as everywhere) is hot and dusty in summer, and desolate and drear with mud in fall and spring, and in winter the winds sweep the snow across it; but it does sometimes cross a rich meadow where the song of the larks and bobolinks and blackbirds are tangled. Follow it far enough, it may lead past a bend in the river where the water laughs eternally over its shallows.

"Mainly it is long and wearyful and has a dull little town at one end, and a home of toil at the other. Like the main-travelled road of life it is traversed by many classes of people, but the poor and the weary predominate."<sup>273</sup>

The dedication, which is poignantly personal, illuminates his feeling:

"To my father and mother, whose half-century pilgrimage on the main-travelled road of life has brought them only toil and deprivation, this book of stories is dedicated by

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272. A Son of the Middle Border, 418.

273. Main-Travelled Roads, 5.

a son to whom every day brings a deepening sense of his parents' silent heroism."<sup>274</sup>

Up to the time of the appearance of Main-Travelled Roads, Garland asserts in his memoirs, "writers on farm life had arranged the weather pleasingly.

"It was always lovely June and the hay-makers 'tossed the fragrant clover' wearing jaunty, wide-rimmed hats, while the girls in dainty white gowns looked on from the shade of a stately tree. . . .

"In order to present the realities of that life, I put in the storm as well as the sun. I included the mud and manure as well as the wild roses and the clover. Corn-husking and threshing went in for what they were, tests of skill and endurance, not as neighborhood frolics. To work all day in the dust at the tail of a straw stacker was no joke. To husk corn for ten hours on a mile-square field in a savage November wind, with your boots laden with icy slush and your fingers chapped and bleeding, does not make for song. Even haying meant streaming sweat and aching arms. However, the book was less austere than it appeared to the critic, but its proportionate mixture of work and play and sun and shadow rendered it repellent. . . ."<sup>275</sup>

Some of the stories had a theme and treatment far removed from transient political issues. "Up the Coulee" pictures the conflict that arises between two brothers when one returns from an artistic ascent in the East to visit the other. "It is a tremendous situation," Howells commented, "and it is the allegory of the whole world's civilization: the upper dog and the under dog are everywhere, and the under dog nowhere likes it."<sup>276</sup> "A Branch Road" is a study of an illicit elopement, which leaves the reader with a sense of its being justified. "Among the Corn Rows,"

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274. Ibid., 3.

275. Roadside Meetings, 178-179.

276. Main-Travelled Roads, 5.

despite its emphasis on the hardship of farm life, is preponderantly a love story, simple and touching. "Mrs. Ripley's Trip," the first story he wrote, has (to quote Howells again) "a delicate touch, like that of Miss Wilkins."<sup>277</sup> But throughout the book "the poor and the weary predominate."

George Meredith has written of a large class "neither Puritan nor Bacchanalian" who "have a sentimental objection to face the study of the actual world."<sup>278</sup> Many of those who read Main-Travelled Roads were of this group.

The outcry against the book was astonishing to its author. "I had a foolish notion that the literary folk of the West would take a local pride in the color of my work, and to find myself execrated by nearly every critic as 'a bird willing to foul his nest' was an amazement."<sup>279</sup>

It is evident that many western editors resented Garland's unfavorable presentation of farm life as being "bad for business." Robert Peattie, an Omaha newspaper man in the 1890's, tells of writing a series of articles exposing the plight of the Nebraska farmers, only to find that his editor, fearing the drab and bitter pictures would "hurt the state," objected to Peattie's writing.<sup>280</sup>

The Chicago Tribune, nevertheless, gave Main-Travelled Roads and the author high praise:

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277. Ibid., 6.

278. The Idea of Comedy, New York, 1910, 20-21.

279. A Son of the Middle Border, 415.

280. Unpublished Memoirs of Robert Peattie, in possession of his son Professor Roderick Peattie, Department of Geography, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Robert Peattie is the father also of Donald Culross Peattie.



"Hamlin Garland holds the pen in a strong hand. Son of a poor Northwestern farmer, Union volunteer and thoughtful, able, philosophical man, he inherits his father's plain common-sense strength and has by his own efforts added to it a reasonable education and through the combination has achieved a literary success pronounced and well earned. His stories of homely farm life--more especially its seamy side--have appeared in the Arena, in Harper's Weekly, and elsewhere, and have attracted notice by their Tolstoian boldness, plain speaking, and accurate observation. Three of the six short stories in this book are from those periodicals; the others are new.

"The seamy side, according to Garland, is about all there is to farm life--in fact to all life outside the great cities. Never does he give us the prosperous and happy farmer, glorying in his acres, his flocks and herds, his sons and daughters, starting in life more cultivated and better off than did their parents, who themselves are happier in those respects than were any of their ancestors. It would be interesting to know whether or not he thinks there are none such--and whether, so thinking, he is right or wrong.

"His pictures and incidents of toil, and grime, and discontent are surely wonderfully touching and suggestive. He has unequalled knowledge and power for the depicting of disappointments, disadvantage, discontents. He thinks our system tends to build up cities at the expense of the open country; that our legislation is operating to enrich the employer and impoverish the non-employer, including the farmer. . . ."281

In the East the comment was preponderantly favorable. Besides Howells,<sup>282</sup> Whitman praised the book and hailed the author as a new hope.<sup>283</sup> Remembering how he had read Horace Greeley's paper by the firelight on the Border, Garland must have felt proud to read in the New York Tribune under the title "Summer Reading":

"Mr. Hamlin Garland's name is new, but his work is finished of its kind. He is a realist and he offers views of life such as present themselves actually to the observer;

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281. Issue of June 13, 1891, 12.

282. The Introduction to the 1893 (Stone and Kimball) edition is a reprint of Howells's review in Harper's "Easy Chair."

283. A Son of the Middle Border, 417.

fragmentary views, that is to say, having neither beginning nor end, full of perplexities and unsolved problems.

"It is encouraging to find that our young American writers are turning more and more to their own country for material, and it is not surprising that those who take this course are rewarded by a success that promises to mean much in the future."<sup>284</sup>

In The Writer, a magazine published in Boston, appeared two essays and a review of Main-Travelled Roads. All these must have lifted Garland to a high pitch of exultation. Charles E. Hurd, his old friend on the Transcript, writing the leading article, declared:

"Among the few young American authors who have made good their claim to a permanent place in literature during the past half-dozen years, not one has shown a stronger individuality or a more distinct purpose in his work than Hamlin Garland.

"He knew the exact field in which he felt that he was born to work; a field of wonderful richness, and as yet almost wholly untilled. Whatever the temptations that seemed to lead away from it to more prompt and profitable results, they were put aside, not as temptations to be restricted, but as obstacles in the way of that success he was determined to achieve and felt that he could achieve. . . .

"He had no respect for conventionalities in life or in literature. . . .

"Today he holds a [sic] first place among American short-story writers. There is nothing in that department of current literature more virile or truer in atmosphere and detail than some of his studies of Western life and character. . . .

"A great deal of Mr. Garland's power lies in his intense earnestness. There is no uncertainty about his creed, whether it touches religion, politics, art, literature, or social reform. What he believes he believes all through, and it is not always what other people believe. . . .

"His quick sympathies and an intolerance of all forms of social and political oppression have given most of his stories a painful tinge. . . ."

". . . his plays 'Under the Wheel' and 'A Member of the Third House' deal with living questions which cry out for settlement. . . ."285

Joseph E. Chamberlin, also of the Transcript, recounting Garland's early life in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Dakota, wrote:

"We may suppose that the Indian and wolf stories--true ones, every one--which the boy heard at his father's stove-side ('fireside' is an unrealistic word which belongs to a vanished past in the West) made a story-teller of him; the hard nomadic lot that the father led upon a rich soil, with no apparent chance to get a living out of it, made him a land reformer and 'Henry George' man; and a kind of Puritan fervor of mind, inherited from his Scotch-Yankee blood, has made him an uncompromising 'Veritist,'--as he calls, for want of a better word, the literary school to which he belongs. . . .

"His Western pictures are to the conventional thing what Monet's paintings, made all in the open air, are to studio landscapes. . . .

"He is of uncompromising and yet thoroughly amiable temperament, with no bitterness in his soul against any man, but plenty of hatred of injustice. . . .

"I have sometimes thought that his strong reforming temperament had led him to see in the Western farmer's life a somewhat darker, harder thing than it really is; but he has no other earthly motive than the exact portrayal of truth in his stories. . . ."286

The review in this magazine refers to the "unmistakable suggestion of Dickens and Howells" in Main-Travelled Roads. In his closing remarks the reviewer advises young writers to study the style of the book and, like its author, "to write of life as

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285. The Writer, V, October, 1891, 207-208.

286. Ibid., 209.

they see it, not as they think it should be."<sup>287</sup>

But there was another sort of reception and influence of Main-Travelled Roads which the author could not begin to know until years after the book appeared. That was the testimony of American creative writers, his younger contemporaries, who read the book in their formative years and found it deeply impressed upon their memories.

Sinclair Lewis, for example, in his Stockholm speech accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930, expressed his indebtedness to Garland's stories, of which Lewis said:

"I read them as a boy in a prairie village in Minnesota--just such an environment as was described in Mr. Garland's tales. They were vastly exciting to me. I had realized in reading Balzac and Dickens that it was possible to describe French and English common people as one actually saw them. But it had never occurred to me that one might without indecency write of the people of Sauk Centre, Minnesota, as one felt about them. Our fictional tradition, you see, was that all of us in Midwestern villages were altogether noble and happy; that not one of us would exchange the neighborly bliss of living on Main Street for the heathen gaudiness of New York or Paris or Stockholm. But in Mr. Garland's 'Main-Travelled Roads' I discovered that there was one man who believed that Midwestern peasants were sometimes bewildered and hungry and vile--and heroic. And, given this vision, I was released; I could write of life as living life."<sup>288</sup>

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287. Ibid., 223.

288. Addresses by Erik Axel Karlfeldt and Sinclair Lewis, on the Occasion of the Award of the Nobel Prize, Stockholm, 1930, 21-22. In this connection, Mr. Carl Van Doren's comment on the relation between Garland and Lewis is informing. In an article written in 1921 that critic said: "It throws a strong light upon the progress of American society and literature during the past generation to point out that the service recently performed by 'Main Street' was, in its fashion, performed thirty years ago by 'Main Travelled Roads.'" But the pictures were different, Mr. Van Doren continues, in that whereas Sinclair Lewis charges the villagers are dull, Garland charged the farmers were oppressed. Van Doren, "Contemporary American Novelists," The Nation, CXIII, November 23, 1921, 596.

Theodore Dreiser's letter to Garland telling of his admiration of Main-Travelled Roads (and of Rose of Dutcher's Coolly) merits quotation in full:

"399 East 144th  
The Clara  
Friday, Jan. 8th 1903

"Dear Mr. Garland:-

"Such cordial goodwill as you express is never late and always welcome. Years ago (1894) when a newspaper writer in Pittsburgh I made the acquaintance of 'Main Traveled Roads' in the lovely Carnegie Library of Allegheny while lounging away the long afternoons of my 'city hall' assignment. I have never forgotten it. Like the other beautiful things of life those fresh flowered stories of yours became identified with my dearest remembrances and I have always followed your work with interest. Only a year ago I read 'Rose of Dutcher's Coolly.'

"I am not of Chicago in the way you seem to think though I did live and work there for a time. Indiana is my home and New York City my present abode. In between these come many places, but who has not wandered.

"Your kind wish to know more of me is reciprocated, though in a public way I seem to know much of you already, and I sincerely hope that we may meet and soon. If you have the wish and the time I am sure it will not be long before we do.

"Sincerely yours

"Theodore Dreiser"

In 1939, Dreiser refers to his early reading of Main-Travelled Roads and adds that he has "always considered it the soundest piece of realism that ever came from Garland's pen."<sup>289</sup>

Writing in 1934, Owen Wister recalled:

"When Mr. Garland's collection of stories entitled 'Main Travelled Roads' appeared a long while ago, all readers

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289. Letter to Eldon Hill, December 28, 1939.

who valued authentic American fiction felt that a new pen had begun to write."<sup>290</sup>

Zona Gale writes:

"When I was in college I read Hamlin Garland's 'Main Travelled Roads,' 'Rose of Dutchers Coolee' and 'Pap's Old Flaxen.' These books gave me a sharp sense of the integrity of writing which dealt honestly with commonplace material, and did me a very great service.

"I still feel that this is the way to treat material, neither romanticising nor being swept into any period reaction of underestimation.

"Faithfully yours,

"Zona Gale

"Portage, Wisconsin  
November 7, 1934"<sup>291</sup>

Similarly, John Erskine gives this personal testimony:

"When I was a boy in college I read Main Traveled Roads [sic], and discovered in its pages what was for me a new America, and also a new kind of realism, so full of sympathy for man and nature that it was like romance.

"Since then I've read and loved everything Mr. Garland has written, and time increases my admiration for his noble art. He is surer of his place than most of us. The Middle Border belongs to him.

"He gave the kindest of welcomes to me, a younger writer trying to learn the craft, and his friendship has been one of the good things in my fortune.

"John Erskine"<sup>292</sup>

To Miss Ruth Suckow, whose Iowa Interiors bear striking similarity to Garland's prairie tales,<sup>293</sup> there is no doubt of

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290. Letter from Owen Wister to Eldon Hill, November 27, 1934.

291. Letter to Eldon Hill. Miss Gale's spelling of the titles is followed.

292. Letter dated September 5, 1933, to A. G. Beaman, California business man, who arranged a dinner at the Los Angeles University Club on September 14, 1933, in honor of Garland's seventy-third birthday.

293. See Ima Honaker Herron, The Small Town in American Literature, Durham, N. C., 1939, 411.

the influence:

"I read both 'Main Traveled Roads' and 'Prairie Folks' a long time ago. They seemed to me at the time to be almost the first stories I had read which held the actual atmosphere of the Middle West. To that extent, they did have an influence on my early writing. My admiration for the finest of them, notably 'The Return of the Private,' is just as strong now as it was then.

"It has been a disappointment, however, that following his beautiful recreation of that atmosphere in 'A Son of the Middle Border,' Mr. Garland seemed to feel a necessity for apologizing for the subject matter of his early books. They are some of the finest, all the same, in the literature of the Middle West.

"Sincerely,

"Ruth Suckow  
(Mrs. F. R. Nuhn)"294

Most critics have come to agree with the judgment of Robert Morss Lovett that Main-Travelled Roads is "certainly a landmark in the development of American fiction."295

In the few years after its publication the country boy from Dakota frequently read of himself as "a rising young author" and as "a leader in American realism." The book--probably the apogee of his fictional work--was to remain his favorite through the years.296 In the summer of 1939, when asked which books he was gladdest to have written, the author in his seventy-ninth year named it at the head of his list.297

#### A Nomadic Year

On January 30, 1892, the Chicago Daily News carried an

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294. Letter to Eldon Hill, January 10, 1935.

295. Letter to Eldon Hill, November 27, 1934.

296. Conversation with the present writer.

297. The others which he mentioned were A Son of the Middle Border, A Daughter of the Middle Border, and Rose of Dutcher's Coolly.

interview with "Prof. Hamlin Garland of Boston, author of 'Main-Travelled Roads' and other successful and highly realistic stories," reporting him to be in Chicago "to consult with people of literary tastes in regard to establishing an independent theater in this city."

In this year Garland published no less than four books. He filed copyright on Jason Edwards on January 4.<sup>298</sup> A Member of the Third House he entered on March 3, and on March 26 two copies were received at the Copyright Office.<sup>299</sup> A Little Norsk was entered on June 18; the copies were filed on June 30.<sup>300</sup> On October 30 two copies of A Spoil of Office were filed with the registry.<sup>301</sup> With the exception of A Little Norsk, these books are all of political and economic import.

A Spoil of Office won the highest critical praise of all these books. Of the reviews and letters which he received on it, the following by Howells doubtless pleased him most:

"Jefferson, Ashtabula co., Ohio  
Sept. 14, 1892.

"Dear Garland:

"Mrs. Howells has sent me your letter, and kept your MS. at Intervale; as soon as I get back I will report to you about it. I was called out here by my father's severe sickness; I'm glad to say he's mending. -- I read A Spoil of Office [sic] as soon as I got it, and I meant long ago to have told you how much I liked it. The story interested me greatly; your hero was simply and strongly studied; I knew him and felt him from

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298. No. 660, Registry of Copyright, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Jason Edwards was the novelization of Under the Wheel.

299. Transcribed from records of the Registry of Copyright.

300. Ibid.

301. Ibid.



first to last. It was brave of you to take a Woman's Righter for a heroine; but Nettie Russell was worth a lot of her for human nature; Nettie was fine, and awfully true. I think you have got very close to the Life of classes and kinds as well as persons; the book is new in that, and I am proud of it for that reason. At first I did not like your seeming to change in favor of the Democracy against Republicanism; when I saw that this was not final I was consoled.--I read every word of the book.

"Yours ever

"W. D. Howells."

In the spring of 1892 Garland left Boston for his first trip through the South. He visited Philadelphia, Washington, New Orleans, and Vicksburg.<sup>302</sup>

He made another trip through the West in this year observing conditions among the farmers of the Middle West and again enjoying the sights of the Mountain West and the Pacific Coast.<sup>303</sup> He was in Omaha in July to attend the convention of the Peoples' Party.<sup>304</sup> His father came on and was proud to see his son hob-nob with General Weaver and other luminaries of the Party. Hamlin Garland was asked to give a dramatic reading of "Under the Lion's Paw." At the conclusion, the convention hall applauded him thunderously. There was a flutter of handkerchiefs; there were cries of "Garland! Garland!" At this point Mrs. Peattie, who was reporting the convention for the Omaha Herald, saw old Richard Garland put his head in his arms and shake with sobs. For him his son had "arrived."<sup>305</sup>

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302. MS. notebook, 1892.

303. Ibid.

304. Unpublished, MS. Memoirs of Elia W. Peattie, in the possession of Professor Roderick Peattie, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

305. Ibid.

It was in November or December that he took his parents on the trip to California, of which he has told in A Son of the Middle Border.<sup>306</sup> Among the cities which he visited while his parents stayed with relatives at Santa Barbara were Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Francisco, and Portland.<sup>307</sup>

He visited Joaquin Miller at Oakland Heights and recorded his impressions thus:

"After leaving the car I walked along a rising wood bordered with Eucalyptus trees and Australian Acacias.  
 ---One young man said of Miller. 'He's a rough old fellow. Wears boots. I scarcely ever see him without boots.'  
 ---I knew the little hut which is shown in the picture in the Arena. (His child's pony stable.)  
 ---A pleasant-faced old lady came to the door. A German type. Wholesome and sunny tempered.  
 ---Miller came up the walk from town. I knew him afar off. His hair is getting gray and his beard is long but he looked like his pictures.

"He greeted me in off-hand western fashion and told me to step into his study which was a small frame cottage somewhat like a western claim shanty.

"It has all sorts of odds and ends, pictures of fruits scraps of book notices and newspapers pinned on the wall. A saddle hung in a corner.

"---I liked him at once. He was frank simple and communicative.---He refused to allow me to discuss Miller; he wanted to hear more of me.

---There are two or three little houses here. One where his aged mother lives and cooks for him, attended by a friend, one for himself, one for his brother and one for company. His doors are never closed from year to year and he lives practically without fire. . . .

"---The totality of impression made upon me was fine and strong. I gripped his hand with that vague pain of parting which I feel when I say good bye to men and women

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306. 446-454. The MS. notebook of this trip is dated December, 1892.

307. MS. notebook, 1892.

of kin nearer than blood relation. I walked off down the road seeing in an abstracted way the splendor of the lighted city my mind dwelling upon this man who was going back to his hermit-like hut in the high hill-side. With his wolf wrapt around him and the dreams of a fairer and more Christ-like living together of men, filling his brain. . . ."308

An interview in the Los Angeles Herald for November 27, 1892, gives a conception of the author's opinions of his books at the time. Since Garland affirmed the accuracy of the article, it is submitted here in its entirety for its biographical value:

"HE CRITICIZES HIS OWN BOOKS

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"Hamlin Garland Talks About His Literary Work

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"His Ideas as to Construction and His Methods

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"An Interesting Interview with a New Literary Lion - He Touches Briefly on His Political Theories  
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"Mr. Hamlin Garland, the noted writer of western stories, and who is as particularly well versed in political economy, is in the city.

"He has been a literary man for ten years, and laughingly referred to the hard time when he had to struggle the hardest. Mr. Garland is on the Coast principally to observe it, with a probable view to new material for a novel of short stories.

"Tell something of your works, your idea of them and of their motive," was asked by the reporter.

"In Jason Edwards, although it starts in Boston, it deals with a typical country existence, and my idea there was to contrast the actual west with the actual Boston. Not the general idea of Boston; the one of Beacon street, but the Boston outside of Beacon street, the real city, of which people do not know.

"When I deal with farm life it is from what I know, and all the incidents spoken of in this work I have been through with myself.

"There is a mystic quality connected with free land, and it has always allured men into the West. I wanted to show that it is a myth. I also desired to deal with the American workingman when his livelihood was cut off. I have made an active study of the iron workers and have talked with men who had pursued the more elusive western paradise, but who had returned without finding it. I believe, as I stated in the introduction to the work, that when the escape to free land is cut off, the reaction on American wages will come.

"The reduction will not probably come in the cutting down of dollars and cents, but in the raise of rent, which is practically the same thing. And this raise of rent is just as certain to come as is the leveling of mountains and the filling up of valleys.

"The idea in the Spoil of Office was to treat of the West and its great political movements and revolutions as they would stand related to a young man of political ambitions like Bradley Talcott. The whole book deals with things and events as seen from this young man's center. I tried to take him through a development of a farm hand whose opportunities had been meager and who did not realize his power of development, on through many changes, up to his life in congress - that is, to apparent success.

"His success, however, from my point of view, consisted in his keeping himself clean and unspotted in his public life, so full of temptations. The climax of his life, in my estimation, came in his rise to a comprehension of the altruism which was expressed throughout by Ida Wilbur. While it is a political novel, it is a political novel as the veritest would make it; a veritist could not fail to make mention of politics, for they are flying in the air. The book is full of problems, the inordinate growth of cities, the apparent thinning out of the rural population and other problems. In this book I have no mouthpiece. I aim to have it an actual work and having it an actual scene of the west. Each man, speaking his own panaces and leaving the reader to judge of them. While I am a reformer I want to be an artist and I do not aim to teach obviously but to teach rather as light instructs us.

"The Little Norsk is really a statement of the problem of two modern men in their relation to each other and in relation to a motherless girl. There are in this little story a great many things that are to me very vital. But perhaps the primary motive is the delineation of life, which is the primary motive of all my stories.

"The Member of the Third House really sprang obscurely from experiences in Chicago and Boston and certain transactions in Washington some three or four years ago. It is

probable that Boston contributed the largest part. This work illustrates the power of this novelist. He takes mental notes of everything; for him to use pencil or paper would result only in a confusion of ideas. He builds upon his unconscious observation. He seems to absorb something from everything.

"A number of amusing incidents came to my notice concerning this work. The various reviews attempted to locate the scene of the book; one had it in Albany, N. Y., another in Chicago and another in Washington, D. C. Another paper said that the author had evidently formerly been a political rounder, judging from the knowledge of legislative lobbying that was shown, when in reality I have never had any connection with proceedings of this nature.

"My object in this work was to point out the danger that threatens every legislature and city council through the endeavors of corporations to obtain street car and other valuable franchises.

"As to my methods of work, I never write mechanically and never unless it is a pleasure to me. I generally have ten to fifteen themes in process of construction, as a painter with his numerous easels placed over his studio, would work according to his inspiration. I work from 8 a.m. until 12 o'clock, and let nothing interrupt me. Sometimes I write very rapidly, and always revise carefully, but as a rule do not eliminate very much. I have no power to change the great idea plan of a book; I merely change the details.

"It is probable that Main Travelled Roads represents me in my methods of work, and especially that of the Chole sic country, more than any other of my books. You observe that I never plot. 'Up the Chole' represents my impressions of life as completely as anything I have ever written. I like the short story comprising from 6000 to 20,000 words. I think it is the most perfect form of writing. Many of my stories are shaping themselves into tales numbering from 15,000 to 20,000 words. They are really novelettes.

"The Spoil of Office I think kindly of. It is a broader canvas, but in the portrayal of western life and passion I think Main Travelled Roads is above it.

"I do not expect to write another political novel. I aim not to repeat, and as my ideas in this respect have been stated, it is improbable that I will ever write of politics again. I expect some time to treat of Chicago, and of university life, also. The next work I will publish will be entitled Prairie Folks. In it will be presented the various

types of pioneer and country life.

"I am very much pleased with Los Angeles. Whether it is the contrast of descending suddenly upon it from the magnificent desolation of the Rocky Mountains, I cannot say. Certainly it was one of the most marvelous changes I ever experienced. What will be the result of my visit to the Pacific Coast is as yet unknown to me, but it will probably have some literary expression."

The Reformer's Ardor Cools

Garland's notebooks for 1892 are filled with enthusiastic descriptions of western scenes and with interesting ideas for stories. On reading his records, one feels that social problems are becoming less and less insistent in the author's mind. Though in that year he continued to address the farmers of the Middle Border on the Populist cause and on the Single Tax, his mind was mainly centered upon his personal ambitions and family concerns.<sup>309</sup>

When his mother, whose sufferings in the migratory Border life had been a main source of his literary protests, told him, "I shall be happy if only you are successful," Garland experienced two feelings. First, he lost something of the mood of bitterness; and, secondly, he felt a "renewed determination to rescue her from the destitution and loneliness of this arid land."<sup>310</sup>

Meanwhile, however, the social unrest among the farmers showed little sign of abating. In the very year with which the present account deals, Gilder had published an article on "The Discontent of the Farmer" in which the writer, J. R. Dodge, asked, "What means the groundswell that is moving the rural population?" and added,

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309. A Son of the Middle Border, 425.

310. Ibid., 428-429.

"Discontent may be a signal of distress or a sign of progress."<sup>311</sup>

The prospect was as dark as it was in the late 1880's.

Yet Garland, notwithstanding his tours of the wheatlands as a People's Party speaker, "surrounded by men and women, work-worn like his father and mother,<sup>312</sup> failed to maintain his reforming zeal.

It is true that he wrote for Flower a journalistic account of "The Alliance Wedge in Congress." And in this article on leaders such as Jerry Simpson, Thomas E. Watson, Senator Pepper, and Tom L. Johnston, Garland declares:

"These men corroborated my own impression that great forces are moving. There seems approaching a great periodic popular upheaval similar to that of '61. Everywhere as I went through the aisles of the House, I saw it and heard it. The young Democrats were almost in open rebellion against the domineering policy of the old legislators. The Republicans were apprehensive, almost desperate. Place-holders were beginning to tremble, but in the midst of it the men who were advocating right and justice instead of policy sat eager, ready for the struggle."<sup>313</sup>

But of these great forces, the young novelist was becoming less and less a part.

On his trips about the country during this year a large share of his leisure time went into his investigations of "spirit phenomena." In Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities he was approached by mediums who knew of his membership in the American Psychical Society. Often he spent many hours in tests of

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311. The Century Magazine, XLIII, January, 1892, 447.

312. A Son of the Middle Border, 427.

313. The Arena, V, March, 1892, 457.

slate-writing and "trumpet voices."314

In all these activities Garland was a long way from following the counsel which William Dean Howells had directed to him two years before:

"Boston, April 16, 1890.  
184 Commonwealth Avenue

"My dear Garland:

"Here's a chance to do good, get a little money, and learn thoroughly the condition and character of the poor--just what Tolstoi did. I'm too old and too busy. Don't you want to try? If not, don't you know some student who does? Please answer soon.

"Yours ever

"W. D. Howells."315

The response, in words or in deeds, has not appeared. This is not to say that Garland abandoned the cause of the people; the truth is that his interest in social reform and in social questions as the basis of literary portrayals was declining.

In November an article on "The West in Literature" appeared in the Arena under Garland's name. One searches it in vain for any

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314. Forty Years of Psychic Research, 22-53. This study remained one of his chief interests intermittently throughout the rest of Garland's life. In an unfinished letter found in his desk after his death on March 4, 1940, he wrote:

"Dear Mr. Hill:

"When you reach a discussion of my psychic work, I want you to understand that I regard it a legitimate subject for literary treatment. It is not a religious subject with me, or a wholly scientific pursuit--it is an extension of my work as a writer. For nearly fifty years it has been a part of my work and now it becomes more and more important as an exploration into unexplored biology. Write of my books on the subject as you would deal with a book by me on a new continent or a new social organization. . . ."

315. Unpublished letter in the Garland files.



reference to economic problems. The import of the essay is almost entirely aesthetic. The conclusion sums up the main points:

"Art, after all, is an individual thing. A man must first be true to himself. The advice I give to my pupils who are ambitious to write is the essence of veritism: 'Write of those things of which you know most, and for which you care most. By so doing you will be true to yourself, true to your locality, and true to your time.' And that is the word I would like to speak to the young writers of the West to whom I may never be able to appeal by word of mouth.

"I am a Western man; my hopes and ambitions for the West arise from absolute knowledge of the possibilities. I want to see her prairies, her river-banks and coules, her matchless skies, put upon canvas. I want to see her young writers writing better books, her young artists painting pictures that are true to the life they live and the life they know. I want to see the West supporting her own painters and musicians and novelists; and to that end I want to state my earnest belief, which I have carefully matched with the facts of literary history, that to take a place in the long line of poets and artists in the English language, the Western writer must, above all other things, be true to himself and to his time. To imitate is fatal."<sup>316</sup>

In shaping (or re-shaping) his literary credo at this time, great was the influence of Howells, for whose critical judgment Garland had the deepest respect, and of The Century editor, whom Garland especially desired to please. "Don't preach--exemplify," Howells urged him. "Don't let your stories degenerate into tracts." And Gilder admonished him "not to leave Beauty out of the picture."<sup>317</sup>

So far as his vigorous work in social protest is concerned, the year 1892 marks the climax; the rest is denouement. In the publishing of his books that year saw the end of his connection

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316. The Arena, VI, November, 1892, 676. A part of this essay was reprinted in Crumbling Idols, Chapter III, 33-36.

317. A Son of the Middle Border, 417.

with the Arena Company. "It is a mistake for you to be associated with cranks like Henry George and writers like Whitman," one of his counselors had told him. "It is a mistake to be published by the Arena. Your book [Main-Travelled Roads] should have been brought out by one of the old established firms. If you will fling away your radical notions and consent to amuse the governing classes, you will succeed."<sup>318</sup>

There spoke a voice of the Gilded Age. How could a son of poverty fail to find it tempting?

The financial failure of A Spoil of Office coupled with the disbanding of the People's Party largely accounted for his deflection from the writing of political novels.<sup>319</sup> Moreover, as his notebooks of 1892 show, he had discovered a new field of interest in the High Country of the far West. In Roadside Meetings, too, he has summarized his feelings about the beauties of Colorado.

"Enraptured with this glorious region, which lay two miles above the level of Boston, I rode through forests as beautiful and almost as commodious as those in which Shakespeare's lovers walked and wooed. No imagined mingling of mead and stream, no savannah of the poet could surpass the splendor and variety of the wilderness through which we camped. In its beauty I forgot all my social missions, all my sordid, savage years."<sup>320</sup>

While in the West, Garland was for a time the guest of Louis R. Ehrich, a member of a wealthy merchant firm in New York City. Ehrich, who had been ordered to Colorado Springs by his physician, lived in a luxurious home overlooking the Garden of the Gods. His

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<sup>318</sup>. Loc cit.

<sup>319</sup>. Roadside Meetings, 187.

<sup>320</sup>. Ibid., 184.

generous hospitality led Garland to say of him, "He made me feel, as never before, the civilizing power of money."<sup>321</sup>

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321. Loc. cit. The italics are the present writer's.

## NEW YORK INTERLUDE

In his new book, Mr. Van Wyck Brooks writes:

"With the advance of the nineties the New England mind was steeped in disappointment and chagrin. The impulse that had characterized it seemed to be exhausted, and its mood was sad, relaxed, and reminiscent. . . .The older writers were all but gone, as the squirrels were disappearing on the Common; and Barrett Wendell, the Harvard professor, expressed the general feeling that the days of the Yankee folk were numbered. 'We are vanishing into provincial obscurity,' he wrote in 1893. 'America has swept from our grasp. The future is beyond us.'"<sup>322</sup>

Remarkably coincident is Hamlin Garland's journal record of his return to New England in the first days of 1893:

"I came back to her with strange fondness that is half pity. She sits apart from the nation--each year this grows more evident but she is our past. She can afford to let the West have the present and the future.

"Her mountains are mole-hills but they are storied. Her hills are sacred with the blood of seven generations of toilers.

"The West has its sweeps of mountains--its spread of plain infinite as the sea but New England has its rambling stone-walls, its exquisite nooks, its curving lanes shaded with elms, its springs and its brakes and ferns.

"It has broad low stunt-roofed houses that thrill the heart with memories of fire-places and thanksgiving pleasures and home-comings."<sup>323</sup>

Under date of January, 1893, he continues:

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322. New England: Indian Summer, New York, 1940, 409.

323. MS. Notebook, "Winter '92 and '93"

"To come back into Boston was like coming into a packet. Its insularity and its self-sufficiency were frigidly disheartening. Its pinching quality was felt in many ways. Its local great men had a reverence which New York and Chicago do not give any body not even men of national fame. Its position keeps it apart from the world that streams in at New York and on to Chicago. It is a strange thing this coming into it as I do tonight. What a change since the time when I walked its streets a trembling timid and bitter youth."<sup>324</sup>

Howells had by this time moved down to New York. From 40 West Fifty-Ninth Street he wrote his father on January 22, 1893:

"Hamlin Garland is coming to supper with us this evening, and then he and I are going to Henry George's for the evening."<sup>325</sup>

Boston was, in truth, giving way to its rival as the literary center of America at this time; and Garland, always eager to be in the midst of interesting events, gladly moved to New York to join his brother, an actor with the Hernes in Shore Acres. In a small furnished apartment the two sons of Richard Garland established headquarters--it could hardly be called a home.<sup>326</sup> The address was 107 West One Hundred and Fiftieth Street.<sup>327</sup>

It was here that Stephen Crane was a frequent visitor to take counsel with the older author and to receive, not only encouragement, but also beef-steaks and the good solid help of dollars.<sup>328</sup> Crane brought his manuscripts--that is, such as were not "in hock" to his typist--for his friend's scrutiny.<sup>329</sup> Thomas Beer has told with

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324. Loc. cit.

325. Letter quoted in Mildred Howells, Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, II, 31.

326. A Son of the Middle Border, 429-430.

327. Ibid., 429. A letter from Hamlin Garland to Albert Bigelow Paine, dated January 5, 1893, is addressed from this place.

328. Roadside Meetings, 193-199.

329. Ibid., 197.

admirable skill the story of how Garland, serving as Crane's "rescuing angel," interested Howells in Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and brought to the struggling writer applause which meant much to him.<sup>330</sup>

Once when asked what Garland looked like, the author of Maggie replied, "Oh, like a nice Jesus Christ."<sup>331</sup>

When Crane published his first novel, Garland wrote for *Flower* a review of it in contrast to Bourget's Cosmopolis. The essay, entitled "An Ambitious French Novel and a Modest American Story," is believed to be the first printed notice of Maggie. Since the review is so revelatory of Garland's literary beliefs in the 1890's, it perhaps merits extensive quotation:

"This latest of Bourget's novels is of the sort that America can get along very well without. It has some excellences (unfortunately), just enough to get a reading, though it will be dull to those to whom most French novels are a stale story well told. It is a singular thing that French writers should confine themselves so largely to morbid sexuality and to the criminal classes. They make unpardonably dull books, because there is so little real life in them. Most of them are pathological, as Nordan Nordau called it, diseased, not healthy. . . . It is not salacious; it is only a study of the abnormal pursued in the evident belief that there is more human nature in crime and vice than in the commonplace, wholesome action of men and women. This is a mistake from my point of view.

"Maggie; a Story of New York." This is of more interest to me, both because it is the work of a young man, and also because it is a work of astonishingly good style. It deals with poverty and vice and crime also, but it does so, not out of curiosity, not out of salaciousness, but because of a distinct art impulse, the desire to utter in truthful phrase a certain rebellious cry. It is the voice of the slums. It is not written by a dilettante; it is written by one who has lived the life. . . . It gives the dialect of the slums as I have never before seen it written--crisp, direct, terse. It is another locality finding voice.

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330. See Beer's Stephen Crane, New York, 1926, 94-96.

331. Ibid., 60.

"It is important because it voices the blind rebellion of Rum Alley and Devil's Row. It creates the atmosphere of the jungles, where vice festers and crime passes gloomily by, where outlawed human nature rebels against God and man."<sup>332</sup>

According to Garland's recollection, it was in the winter of 1894 that Crane brought him the manuscript of The Red Badge of Courage.<sup>333</sup> This date seems doubtful. Beer writes:

"With genuine regret I have differed from Mr. Hamlin Garland's account of the birth of 'The Red Badge' which, in his recollection, was first shown to him in 1893 and in the month of February. Crane's own statement and the memory of other friends place the writing rather later. I can only suggest that the first rapid draft was the manuscript brought to Mr. Garland in Harlem and that the finished product was shown in the following winter."<sup>334</sup>

Beer's evidence, especially in view of Garland's fallibility in recalling dates, is convincing.

Of Crane's affection and respect for Garland there can be no doubt. The letters from the younger to the older writer, quoted fully in Garland's autobiography, show a feeling almost filial.

"I have not written you because there has been little to tell of late. . . . When anything happens, I'll keep you informed." Once when Garland was absent for a while, Crane implored him, "Don't forget to return to New York soon, for all the struggling talent miss you."<sup>335</sup> Crane dedicated his book of poems, The Black Riders (1895), to Garland. Late in Crane's life he spoke fervently to Joseph Conrad of Garland's heart-warming help.

332. The Arena, VIII, November, 1893, xi-xii. Garland erroneously dates his review June, 1893; see Roadside Meetings, 199.

333. Roadside Meetings, 196.

334. Beer, Stephen Crane, 246-247.

335. Roadside Meetings, 200-202.

336. Conrad's Introduction to Beer's Stephen Crane, 9.

Crane looked upon Garland as an established author, and indeed by this time Main-Travelled Roads and the four books which followed it in the next year had carried his name far. Early in 1893, a writer in the Chicago Tribune, looking back on "Western Literature in 1892" declared:

"In the department of prose fiction Mr. Hamlin Garland is easily first. 'Jason Edwards', 'A Member of the Third House', 'A Spoil of Office', and 'A Little Norsk' were all issued in book form during the last year. All of these are animated by an earnest purpose, and characterized by a truthful, vigorous, and sympathetic art. 'A Little Norsk' in particular is a lovely work."

In February appeared Garland's second book of short fiction, Prairie Folks, or Pioneer Life on the Western Prairies in Nine Stories.<sup>337</sup> This book was published first by F. J. Schulte & Company, Chicago, in the paper-pound "Ariel Library" series at fifty cents.<sup>338</sup>

Commented The Literary World:

"Very fresh, very homely, and very strong, with the harsh, unlovely breath of real life blowing through every page are these stories of life among the Western pioneers and settlers. . . . There is no dash or adventure about them, and no thrilling escapes, grisly bears, or noble redskins; the record is one of the cramping, stifling, squalid conditions of overworked men and their overworked wives who have undertaken the tough job of subduing nature in the sweat of their brows."<sup>339</sup>

Although this review is true, on the whole, it gives a wrong impression in one or two particulars. In the first place, there are "noble redskins" in the only Indian story of the book, "Drifting Crane," a strongly sympathetic account of the pioneer days from the

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337. Chicago Tribune, January 7, 1893, 13.

338. Two copies of the book were filed with the Register of Copyrights in February, 1893, as stated in the records of the Register's Office.

339. In 1895 Stone & Kimball issued it as a revised reprint of the first edition.



aborigine's point of view. The narrative is an epitome of a tragic chapter in history, the domination and downfall of a race. When this admirable story was sent to Harper's Weekly (in which it appeared on May 31, 1890) Frederic Remington, the illustrator, wrote of it:

"The MS called 'Drifting Crane' at hand. I have read it and would like to try and make an illustration. I would take the interview of the cattleman and the chief. It is a very good thing this MS.--has a strong vein of underlying philosophy--is well told, etc."<sup>340</sup>

The second false impression which the review gives is that the volume continues the mood of Main-Travelled Roads. In point of fact, Prairie Folks marks a departure from the bitter social protest of all save one<sup>341</sup> of its predecessors among Garland's works. There is in this volume a great deal less of sociological doctrine and much more of humorous delineation than is usual in his writing up to 1893. Stories like "Uncle Ethan Ripley's Speculation in Patent Medicines," "Elder Pill, Preacher," and "William Bacon's Man," are in the tradition of Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins, and H. C. Bunner.<sup>342</sup>

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340. From the unpublished copy in Hamlin Garland's files. It was sent to him by Merle Johnson. The letter, directed to Fred B. Scholl of Harper's Weekly, is dated February 5, 1890.

341. A Little Norsk, as already noted, is far from a tract.

342. Upon this change in Garland's fiction his friend Mrs. Elia Peattie has commented in her unpublished Memoirs:

"It was not, however, his fault that he compromised with the juvenile taste of America. The publishers positively would not take his work while it retained the austere and tragic qualities of 'Main-Travelled Roads.' He was compelled to write the innocuous sort of material for which the lady writers of New England had set the example, and he lacked the indubitable charm which they gave to their work. A really vigorous and heroic talent was wasted on the inane proprieties."

In The Literary World for April 8, 1893, the writer of "New York Notes" devotes his column to Garland's opinions of his country's letters:

"Mr. Garland, though called a pessimist by one, at least, of his most faithful readers, is very optimistic in his opinion of American literature. He believes that we are destined to produce great writers. 'But we are not going to produce one novel that will cover the whole life of this country, for America is too large and too varied to be treated adequately in one book or by one writer. Each region will have its own literature and that can be produced only by those who have been born in the region and who have a thorough sympathy with its characteristics. Our writers, if they are to produce good work, must study the life around them and reproduce it with all the fidelity of which they are capable.

"Mr. Garland has an abiding faith in the moral value of literature. 'Art is very serious,' he says; his definition of art seems to include certain moral qualities, which in him make a radical reformer, and which by the romanticists are excluded from art altogether."<sup>343</sup>

Garland saw much of the Hernes again during this New York interlude. He was often back stage at the Broadway theater where they were playing, and after the show they would all talk Single Tax as they used to do four years previously in Boston.<sup>344</sup> Garland enjoyed dropping in on Howells, too, at this time; and that the feeling was reciprocal is indicated by the following note:

"40 West 59th St.

"March 19, 1893

"My dear Garland:

"Won't you come to lunch here at one o'clock Wednesday? My brother Joe is here.

"Is it not to prevent your calling any time sooner!"

"Yours ever

"W. D. Howells."

Garland tells us that he was a frequent visitor also at the home  
<sup>345</sup> of Henry George. Indeed, notwithstanding the deep shift of

343. The Literary World, XXIV, April 8, 1893, 112.

344. A Son of the Middle Border, 429-430.

345. Ibid., 431.

emphasis in his fiction, Garland retained an active interest in the Georgist cause. On April 30 he gave an address in Denver, of which the Daily News in that city reported:

"Hamlin Garland, the author and reformer, spoke at the First Congregational church last night on 'Equal Freedom'. The announcement of the address attracted wide attention and Mr. Garland was greeted by an audience of all classes and denominations that filled the church to its doors. The time and place did not seem sufficient to restrain their feelings and applause was frequent and hearty. Mr. Garland said among other things:

"Men are beginning once more not to believe in things as they are. This dissatisfaction is finding expression in the movements known as anarchism, socialism, liberalism, revolutionary communism, etc. The one common thought is that the present condition of things must be changed. The many get too little and the few get too much. The present is not good enough, and the future can be made better.

"We are not pessimists, we are optimists, because the optimist tells the truth and by telling it hopes to make things better. This movement all over the world can be summed up in one sentence. 'The desire for equal rights,' no more and no less. We differ in our methods of restoring this equilibrium. I do not agree with the socialists and others. There will never be an absolutely perfect society.

"I start out with the belief that nature is neither malignant nor beneficent, simply impartial. Poverty in this world, so far as it is involuntary, is not due to nature or an unkind God, but to the niggardliness of man. Suffering comes only when man tries to thwart the laws of nature and of God. It is not the fault of nature that the gulf between the rich and poor widens with civilization. It is man who mistakes. It is his blindness and greed, his lack of love for his fellow-men and his ignorance of their condition and of their thoughts and emotions. The cure is the reassertion of the laws of equality and opportunity and the abolition of privilege."<sup>346</sup>

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346. Denver Daily News, May 1, 1893. The paper's report was based on Garland's manuscript of his address.

## CHICAGO AND WEST SALEM

In the summer of '93 the Columbian Exposition in Chicago engaged Garland's attention.<sup>347</sup> Directing the eyes of the nation and indeed the whole of the civilized world upon the mid-west metropolis, the 1893 Fair strengthened his belief in the cultural future of this city.

From the month of May on through the rest of the year Garland was in Chicago frequently. He and his brother showed their parents the grandeur of "the White City."<sup>348</sup> It was in May, or a little earlier, that Hamlin Garland packed his books in Boston and shipped them to Chicago with a view to making this mid-western city his future home.

He wrote to Howells of the Fair, and on May 28 the elder novelist replied (addressing his letter in care of Messrs. Schulte & Co., 298 Dearborn St., Chicago):

"I am not going to the literary Congress, and shall not write any paper. If the authors assembled need guidance, you are the leader for them."<sup>349</sup>

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347. As Recently as 1935, Garland recalled its inspiration. Writing of the "Century of Progress" in contrast he declared:

"It excited me but it did not exalt me as the Columbian Exposition did. In the first 'World's Fair' the past was a background; in this later industrial Show, the past was held in contempt or used as a condition from which our advance was measured." Letter from Garland to Eldon Hill, February 4, 1935.

348. A Son of the Middle Border, 458.

349. Unpublished letter in Garland's files.

Among the score or more of prominent men and women of letters with whom Garland rubbed shoulders at the "literary Congress" were the following: Gilder, Kirkland, Charles Dudley Warner, Walter Besant, Mary Hartwell Catherwood, Eugene Field, Thomas Nelson Page, Harriet Monroe, G. E. Woodberry, George Washington Cable, and E. C. Stedman.<sup>350</sup>

The Chicago Tribune called the Congress "rich in promise" but "rather elusive in fulfillments."<sup>351</sup>

An eastern literary journal, The Critic, wrote of "the last session of the congress, a particularly interesting one when Mr. Hamlin Garland read a paper on 'Ebb-Tide in Realism.'"<sup>352</sup> The Critic continues:

"Mr. Garland is the victim of the theory that every novelist should draw his inspiration from the soil, should write of nothing but the country he was bred in and the people most familiar to him. He exploited this theory with his accustomed felicity of phrasing and intensity of manner, and was followed by Major Kirkland, who spoke in the same spirit, extolling the present race of novelists with the single exception of Mr. George Meredith, who was ruthlessly and unequivocally thrown from his pedestal.

"This partiality in the consideration of the question moved Mrs. Catherwood to indignation, and in a terse, virile little speech she came to the 'defense of her heroes.' She loved them, she said with special emphasis; 'think of the work that Frenchmen did on this continent two centuries ago! Why should these men be forgotten merely because they are dead? Why should we consider time in the kingdom of art, where there is no past, no present, no future, where it is all one eternal now?' The burst of applause that followed this bit of enthusiasm proved that, to the audience, realism is not the solution of all problems in fiction.

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350. The Chicago Tribune, July 13, 1893, 4; July 14, 1893, 3.

351. Ibid., July 13, 1893, 12.

352. The Critic, July 22, 1893, 3.

"But when Mr. Cable, who presided with much grace, introduced 'what is left of Mr. Hamlin Garland,' his reply was listened to with much interest. Mr. Garland is a partisan, ardent and uncompromising; and it was hard for him to concede any virtue to theories opposed to his own. Nevertheless, he did admit that if an artist feels with his whole soul that the past is better worth writing about than the future, then his rightful work lies in that direction. . . .His stump speech was interesting, however, and the entire discussion was lively and exciting."<sup>353</sup>

Garland recalls the discussion with Mrs. Catherwood as follows:

"In my earnestness I fear I was not a gallant debater, for I remember saying to her, 'What do you know of the farm realities I describe? You are the daughter of the banker in the county town riding up our lane in a covered buggy. You look across the barbed-wire fence and you see two young men binding grain on a Marsh harvester. 'How picturesque,' you say. 'How poetic!' But I happen to be one of those binding the grain. I have been at it for ten hours. I have bound my half of eight acres of oats. My muscles are aching with fatigue. My fingers are worn to the quick and my wrists are full of briars. I know Western farm life. No one can tell me anything about it. I have been stung by hail, and smothered in dust behind the harrow. I have spaded manure in the rain and husked corn in November's mud and snow. I have risen at dawn month after month to milk cows and curry horses, and I have stood at the tail-end of a straw carrier till I was black as a negro and half blind with sweat. You city folk can't criticize my stories of farm life--I've lived them."<sup>354</sup>

This serio-comic controversy which Eugene Field fomented in his "Sharps and Flats" column between the Realists and the Romanticists is recounted fully in Roadside Meetings.<sup>355</sup> The spirit of the verbal thrust and parry is conveyed in an unpublished letter from the poet:

"Chicago...August the 1st..1893

"Dear Garland: You are invited to lunch at one o'clock Thursday with Mr. Francis M. Larned, at the University club in Dearborn street. Several good fellows will compose the

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353. Loc cit.

354. Roadside Meetings, 255.

355. Ibid., 252-256.

party. I wrote to Mrs. Catherwood last evening, and I told her that, after carefully studying you, I had come to the conclusion that you were indubitably the Anti-Christ.

"Sincerely yours,

"Eugene Field, Romanticist."<sup>356</sup>

On the more serious side, it was at the Columbian Exposition historical congress that Professor Frederick J. Turner delivered his paper on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." After mentioning the official closing of free government land in 1890, the historian went on to set forth the great importance of the settlement period in shaping the life of a people. But if Garland heard this paper or was struck with its import on reading it, he made no note of it in any of his extant records.

#### New Publishers and New Hopes

Garland had lofty visions of Chicago's future glory in those days. For The Forum he wrote an article on "The Literary Emancipation of the West," in which he said:

"Centres of art production are moving westward. While Boston and New York are debating which has the most literary men, the West and South are rising to say, 'Pool your issues, good friends. You'll soon need each other's aid to maintain your hitherto unquestioned domination over American literature.'"<sup>357</sup>

He predicted that Chicago would rival New York as a literary market place and would become "a publishing center which by reason of its geographical position would be more progressive than Boston and more American than Manhattan."<sup>358</sup>

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356. From the original among the Garland papers.

357. The Forum, XVI, October, 1893, 156-157. In somewhat modified form this essay appears as the Chapter X, "Literary Centres" in Crumbling Idols.

358. A Son of the Middle Border, 457.

When Herbert S. Stone and Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, two Harvard undergraduates, joined forces and established a new publishing firm in Chicago and Cambridge, Garland was interested.<sup>359</sup> The youthfulness of the partners--they were juniors in college when they launched their business--led Garland to hesitate. He was prone to consider their "facilities inadequate for doing the work of distributing the books."<sup>360</sup>

Soon, however, he decided to try his fortune with the two boys--an unlucky decision, as we shall see. As Garland recounts it:

"Having cast in my lot with Chicago, it was inevitable that I should ally myself with its newest literary enterprise, a business which expressed something of my faith in the west. Not only did I turn over to Stone the rights to Main Travelled Roads, together with a volume of verse--I promised him a book of essays--and a novel."<sup>361</sup>

The Chicago Tribune of August 19 carried on its literary page the announcement, "Mr. Hamlin Garland is about to bring out his first volume of poems." In his 1893 MS. notebook Garland wrote, probably as a suggestion to his publishers:

"Mr. Hamlin Garland is about to issue a volume of verse called 'Prairie Songs and Shadows.' It will be a very beautiful volume of nearly two hundred pages printed on toned etching paper and most sympathetically illustrated by Mr. H. T. Carpenter. The first edition will be a limited edition and will be the author's [sic] edition. Price numbered by the author and autographed, \$5.00. Subscriptions may be sent to the author at his Chicago address--will be booked in the order rec'd. The popular

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359. Sidney Kramer, A History of Stone & Kimball and Herbert S. Stone & Co., 1893-1905, Chicago, 1940, 1.

360. Ibid., 17-18.

361. A Daughter of the Middle Border, 24.



edition of cloth without illuminated [sic] title page will be one dollar.

"Among those who have already subscribed for the authors [sic] edition are

Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Garland.  
Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Howells.  
Mr. and Mrs. B. O. Flower.  
Mr. and Mrs. Jas. A. Herne.  
Mr. and Mrs. Melville Stone.  
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Field.  
Mr. and Mrs. Severance.

"The attention of the trade is called to these editions. Orders will be filled for the popular edition at any time after Sept. 1st. This will be a most popular holiday book."

He was also planning with Stone & Kimball a new edition of Main-Travelled Roads to be issued along with the volume of poems "for the holiday trade." For one of these books, probably Prairie Songs, he requested Howells to write an introduction, which elicited a polite and tactful refusal:

"Magnolia, Aug. 23, 1893.

"Dear Garland:

"A fellow who stands as strong upon his legs as you, wanting a hand from a dotard like me! I think the public would say, 'Who is this pottering fool, who introduces a book of Garland's to us?'

"Get out!

"Try to see us, when you are East.

"Yours ever, W. D. Howells."<sup>362</sup>

It must have been after receiving this note that Garland wrote an undated letter to his new publisher:

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362. From the original in Hamlin Garland's files.

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"I'm afraid you're a little premature in announcing Mr. Howells' introduction unless you've heard from him. You must be very careful how you use his name.

"Your notices are all too meagre. The fact of illustrations should be touched upon.

"You can begin to advertise Miller's at once if you like. I have the matter entirely in charge as Miller wrote you himself. I will decide on a name later. You can call it 'A Wonderful Romance by Joaquin Miller,' until we decide on the name.

"Yours sincerely

"Hamlin Garland."363

The "Miller's book" referred to in this letter was published December 10, 1893, as the sixth to the Stone & Kimball Company imprint.<sup>364</sup> It was Joaquin Miller's Utopian work, The Building of the City Beautiful.

The gratitude of "the poet of the Sierras" for Garland's help in finding a publisher for the book is expressed in these terms:

"My Dear Garland:

"Your fine, strong letter has sent out rays of light like a rising sun, and we are all glad, so glad you found the thing worth reading. I like loyalty! How many would have forgotten a promise to look after the MS.! But here you are, not only reading but commending the matter. Bravo, Garland!

"Now my first idea on reading your letter was to ask you to cut it (the manuscript) down and build it up and work it all over to suit you, and then share the good we might do, the glory and the few shekels which it might bring unto me. But Miss Coolbrith--who is so wise and good--advises that I ask you to cut out whatever your fine sense detects as touching on Mr. Bellamy's ground and do all

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363. From the original in the Yale University Library.

364. Kramer, op. cit., 198.

that you think ought to be done and then, if you can dispose of the MS. to the 'Arena' or elsewhere, to pay yourself first for your work and worry and then remit me. So I ask you to do this. Of course I am to have the property in the manuscript after it goes through the magazine and then, by your help and advice, make it up for a book.

"Yes, I can see where it is too long--so slash away on it, please. Keep the pages and all parts which you cut out, so far as you conveniently can.

"I am tenacious, however, about adhering to the idea that all shall toil; also that God or Nature shall elect--Potentates. Also I am anxious to show that old age is beautiful and that death is not to be dreaded. So the things that lead up to or illustrate these truths should not be cut off. At the same time, my dear boy, I gladly confide the entire matter to you, certain that you can put it in much better form than I. Mother is well and all send you love. Yours,

"Joaquin Miller

"Oakland, Feb. 17, 1893."365

Garland's personal interest in the book and his desire to receive no credit for his revisions are reflected in the following unpublished letter, which also shows he was having his troubles with Stone & Kimball's printer:

"Wood's Hotel  
West Salem, Wis.  
Oct. 8, 1893

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"I'm alarmed over the matter here. I don't think Craig is honest with you or with me. He has promised what he can't or won't fulfill. If you have a clause with a forfeit make him pay it. Don't let him find excuse. I've had the copy before him for weeks.

"Now in regard to the Miller book. Have you written him, sending contract? Don't fail to do so. Send duplicate of my contract.

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365. From the original in Hamlin Garland's files. This letter is quoted in Roadside Meetings, 222-223.

"You did not reply concerning the introduction. Mark you I do not care. The M. S. is salable and my suggestion was merely to further the sale of the book. If it will not in your judgment, that ends it. One thing I insist upon: all royalty goes to the poet and my name must not be known as having anything to do with revision. This is absolute. It would hurt the book and hurt Miller. The changes I made were more in the nature of 'cuts'--By the way. In that part which follows the defeat of the Lion, I've decided it should all come out. The lion episode is a magnificent allegory and must not be apologized for. Also that long part which I have marked 'ital' should come out altogether.

"Yours sincerely

"Hamlin Garland"366

In November Garland sent Howells a sheaf of his verse, probably a copy of the manuscript. Howells's response leads one to believe that he did not know of the forthcoming volume:

"New York, Nov. 10, 1893,

"Dear Garland:

"This is good, and has a lot of thrills in it: a succession of vivid pictures. Don't leave out the definite article! That is always weak. And why is your poetry better for not being tied up in anything, but left lying around loose? You put apples in barrels, potatoes in bags; you bind wheat and stack corn. Why should poetry only be left lie as it falls?

"Yours ever,

"W. D. Howells."367

November and December found Garland again in the East, winding up matters at the Arena office and visiting friends in Boston and New York. The delay in putting out his two books and the scanty

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366. From the original, which is the property of Eldon Hill. The "here" in the first line refers to Chicago. Craig was Stone & Kimball's printer. The italics are Garland's own.

367. From the original in Hamlin Garland's files.

advertising of them caused him much anxiety; he had expected a large holiday sale. Though both Main-Travelled Roads and Prairie Songs were copyrighted on December 4 and listed in the Publisher's Weekly on December 2, the distribution was delayed.<sup>368</sup>

To Stone the author sent a letter of complaint:

"[They]<sup>369</sup> must now go into the rack of Christmas books and will not get ten lines of notice.

"Then again you have no means of advertising except at great expense, and your time is divided between your studies and your business, this is a great objection.

"I am very sorry, but you can see that at this stage of my publishing experience I can't afford to take any chances on successful publication. I have too good facilities of my own for publishing. You need experienced help. You need a regular office and you need to give your whole time to the matter. In view of the fact that these things are not possible with you now I can't see my way clear to letting you have so important a book as my Essays. I don't think you can blame me--under the circumstances. I gave the M. S. of 'Prairie Song' into your hands last August. I have not a copy of it yet. This is terrible delinquency.

"I want to aid you to build up a fine publishing house in Chicago but until you get settled and know what you are going to do and how to do it, I don't feel safe in letting you have my Essays. I have been deeply worried and chagrined by this delay, and to take on myself more such distress would not be just to myself.

"Yours very sincerely

"Hamlin Garland.

"Dec. 16/93."

Three days later he wrote again, this time from New York:

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"Please send a set of the small paper to R. H. Garland, West

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368. Kramer, op cit., 197-198.

369. The original of this letter, with the first page missing, is owned by the Yale University Library.

Salem, Wis. Enclose also the slip of Christmas greeting. Send also a set to Schulte (for Art Young). Charge one set to me and the other to Schulte. I wish you would also enclose the slip containing Art Young's name.

"I wonder if you have found time to read 'Prairie Folks.' It seems to me that is a book which could easily be placed with the other two. The cost of putting out a thousand copies would be very low because I would furnish the plates. Mr. Carpenter would need to be paid for his drawings however. They are quite ready I believe. You have the dies for the cover and it seems to me that we could produce the book at a cost of 30¢ or under. The old edition is almost entirely gone. It is a book which should take its place beside M. T. R. and will do so. It needs a little sharp advertising.

"I'd like to have you decide upon the matter in order to get it into your spring catalogue. If you will take hold of it vigorously and push it with the other two books, I will let it go in at the same co-operative rates. It should have the same die, etc.--and the illustrations will have same general character. All these things will tend to put it where it belongs, with M. T. R. It is a companion volume.

"The cuts will cost about \$75 or possibly \$100. The paper and printing and incidentals ought not to reach more than 20¢ per volume. The whole expense for first edition ought not to reach \$300.

"Pray consider the matter. If you don't care to do it, I will put it into the Arena series. You might have a copy bound up in the same size cover as M. T. R. and see how it looks.

"Yours very sincerely

"Hamlin Garland

"Dec. 19/93  
107 W. 105. St. New York City."370

Of Prairie Songs, a reviewer in the Chicago Tribune declared:

"The verses show close observation of Western scenes, but one misses in them the music of poetry just as one misses in many pieces the magic of rhyme. . . .His work impresses one as diluted Whitmania."371

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370. From the original letter in the Yale University Library. Art Young was a Chicago cartoonist and humorist.

371. The Chicago Tribune, January 13, 1894, 10.

The Boston Transcript was more laudatory:

"There is no use waiting for London praise of the rich and vigorous poetry of Hamlin Garland to acknowledge that it has genuine quality and force. The economics and polemics of this young man must be taken quite apart from his work in literature. When he theorizes least he is of course most an artist. And although his disdain of forms occasionally appears with startling distinctness, in the main he sinks notion in emotion in 'Prairie Songs' and with refreshing and often delicious naturalness sings of the life and nature that he knows best of all.

"Hamlin Garland is not exactly a 'poet without a lyre,' because there is a decided lyric quality in many of the poems in his collection. The advance sheets of 'Prairie Songs' come excellently and sympathetically illustrated by H. T. Carpenter from Stone & Kimball, a new firm, announced on this title page as of 'Cambridge and Chicago,' certainly an interesting juxtaposition of names of publishers' headquarters, and one that suggests interesting future possibilities. If the boundless spirit of Chicago will consent to recognize the vitality of certain academic forms accepted in Cambridge, there will be little need of discussing literature geographically. If the poetry of this book were to be geographically discussed, it might well be called 'Northwestern Poetry' rather than a contribution to Western literature. But any reader of this book, who reads with the understanding and not the map, will recognize in 'Prairie Songs' a great deal of the genuine free air and broad life-inspiration of all poetry that seeks the 'rhythmic soul of things.'

"Where Garland misses originality he echoes Walt Whitman a little. But that is a much healthier sign in an American than echoing Tennyson for example. But, of course, the best poems in the new book are not echoes of any poet."<sup>372</sup>

Another eastern opinion is found in The Literary World (Boston).

The writer in this paper called the poems

"a close reflex of Walt Whitman, of whom the author is evidently a disciple and scholar. Joaquin Miller would seem also to have had a certain influence in forming his style. Here and there is a note of original thrill or a little picture given in a few vivid words."<sup>373</sup>

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372. The Boston Transcript, December 4, 1893, 6.

373. The Literary World, XXV, January 27, 1894, 26.

That Garland could use rhyme is exemplified in the following poem which is perhaps worth quoting for its autobiographical value:

"An Apology

"The ancient minstrel when times befit,  
And his song outran his laggard pen,  
Went forth in the world and chanted it  
In the market place, to the busy men;  
Who found full leisure to listen and long  
For the far-off land of the minstrel's song.

"Let me play minstrel and sing the lines  
Which rise in my heart in praise of the plain!  
I'll lead you where the wild oat shines,  
And swift clouds dapple the wheat with rain.  
If you'll listen, you'll hear the songs of birds  
And the shuddering roar of trampling herds.

"The brave brown lark from the russet sod  
Will pipe as clear as a cunning flute.  
Though sky and sod are stern as God,  
And the wind and plain lie hot and mute--  
Though the gulls complain of the blazing air  
And the grass lies brown and crisp as hair."<sup>374</sup>

Typical of Garland's freedom with metrics and of his use of his boyhood memories are these lines on "Prairie Chickens":

"From brown plowed hillocks  
In early red morning  
They woke the tardy sower with their cheerful cry.  
A mellow boom and whoop  
That held a warning  
A song that brought the seed-time very nigh.

"The circling, splendid anthem of their greeting,  
Ran like the morning beating  
Of a hundred mellow drums--  
Boom, Boom, Boom!  
Each hillock's top repeating  
Like cannon answering cannon  
When the golden sunset comes.

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374. Hamlin Garland, Prairie Songs, Chicago, 1893, 67. This poem was first published in The Literary World, XX, June 8, 1889, 192.



"They drum no more!  
 Those splendid spring-time pickets,  
 The sweep of share and sickle  
 Has thrust them from the hills;  
 They have vanished from the prairie  
 Like the partridge from the thickets,  
 They have perished from the sportsman,  
 Who kills, and kills, and kills!

"Often now,  
 When seated at my writing,  
 I lay my pencil down  
 And fall to dreaming, still,  
 Of the stern, hard days  
 Of the old-time Iowa seeding,  
 When the prairie chickens woke me  
 With their chorus on the hill."<sup>375</sup>

And there is lilt and strength in the closing lines from "The West Wind":

"He is lord of the whole sky's hollow;  
 He possesses the whole vast plain;  
 He leads and the white clouds follow--  
 He frowns and they vanish in rain!"<sup>376</sup>

Two paragraphs from the Foreword to Prairie Songs, not only set forth his aims in the book, but also give us interesting autobiographical data:

"A quarter of a century ago the prairies of Northern Iowa were only just won from the elk and buffalo, whose bones and antlers lay in thousands beside every trail and watering place. These rich and splendid meadows had swarmed with herbivora for ages of undisturbed possession, and every crumbling crib of bones or bleaching antler was a powerful incentive to a boy's imagination. From them my mind was able to construct some idea of the grandeur of the flocks which once peopled these green vistas. Even then I felt the beauty of the wilderness, which is coming to have deeper charm as it passes irrecoverably from sight. . . .

"The prairies are gone. I held one of the ripping, snarling, breaking plows that rolled the hazel bushes and

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375. Prairie Songs, 95.

376. Ibid., 20.

the wild sunflowers under. I saw the wild steers come into pasture and the wild colts come under harness. I saw the wild fowl scatter and turn aside; I saw the black sod burst into gold and lavender harvests of wheat and corn-- and so there comes into my reminiscences an unmistakable note of sadness. I do not excuse it or conceal it. I set it down as it comes to me. I have designedly excluded all things alien to the book and its title. I make no further claim than this;--it is composed of prairie songs."<sup>377</sup>

Concerning the influences upon his verse-writing, Garland writes:

"Riley used to call me 'the poet of the winds' and in truth my life on the prairies and the plains where the wind is a never-resting force led me to write many poems in which its effect on the land or on me is a leading motive. I don't know of any one who has done just this sort of verse. In many of my verses the birds, beasts, and other denizens of the plains are depicted.

"Yes, Lanier influenced me to some degree, and so did Whitman and Joaquin Miller but not to any marked degree. I had a theory that the subject should have its own dress, a garment which would take its shape from the inner urge. In some cases pure lyric was demanded, in others free or intricate rhythms. I did not believe in adopting a fixed form for the expression of all my poetic concepts. I used verse only when prose fell short."<sup>378</sup>

The Stone & Kimball edition of Main-Travelled Roads, like Prairie Songs, was beautifully printed and bound in green cloth with a symbolic design of three cornstalks imprinted in gold on the outside covers. The young idealistic publishers took great care with these books. Main-Travelled Roads was reset not once, but twice.<sup>379</sup> At the end of each volume the words "Printed by John Wilson & Son" appear. The work by the Craig Press of Chicago was not

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377. Ibid., 1-3.

378. Letter to Eldon Hill, December 3, 1934.

379. Kramer, op. cit., 18. Kramer says that the first printing by this Press was unsatisfactory.

acceptable.<sup>380</sup> The young publishers were eager to please Garland; for, according to their historian, "Hamlin Garland's books were the rock on which the firm was securely founded."<sup>381</sup>

In an undated letter to Stone, evidently written after the annoying delay in the publication of his first books by Stone & Kimball, Garland declared:

"The reason why I do not care to promise another book, just now, is because I feel your facilities are inadequate for doing the work of distributing the books. This delay has been very disastrous to me. It has cut me off from any proper attention from the critics and has made the success of the whole enterprise doubtful."<sup>382</sup>

On January 3, 1894, Garland wrote in a similar vein.

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"I don't want you to feel that you must take 'Prairie Folks.' Our ideas and taste on book-making differ so widely that I doubt if we are to find co-operation possible. You are putting too much time and expense on the making of the book whereas the distribution is of paramount importance.

"With regard to 'Prairie Folks' I have involved myself with Mr. Carpenter because at that time I had planned to publish the book myself. Under these circumstances I don't feel like shutting Carpenter out entirely. At the same time I don't feel like asking you to pay for what you don't want. My reply is simply this, if you don't really want to handle the book don't do it under any sentiment of doing me a favor. You know your own mind, so act as you see fit in the matter. I can put the book into the Arena Series, and proceed as before. I only thought it would make a good companion piece to M. T. R.

"I have seen no notices of the books except those which came from friends. I hope we shall not fail to get the press

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380. Ibid., 18. An unpublished postal card from Garland to Stone, dated October 4, 1893, states: "I can't find that things are going forward at all at the Craig Press. No proof for three weeks. Enforce the forfeit if they do not meet the terms of contract. There is no good excuse for the delay."

381. Kramer, op. cit., 17.

382. From the original letter, lent by W. R. Benjamin, New York City.

notices because that seems all that we can get this year. There will be no sale with times as hard as flint. Write me concerning P. F. at once.

"Yours sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland."383

Carpenter was the illustrator of Prairie Songs and of the new edition of Main-Travelled Roads.

That their author was pleased with the beautiful appearance of his books, though doubtful about the monetary profit, is indicated in the following more conciliatory letter, dated January 16, 1894:

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"It was never a loss of confidence in you but in your situation. You had so many distracting interests. You are making yourself felt but it will take a year for you to get settled. I think you're going to build up a great publishing house but you need the machinery of a publishing house in Chicago. I'm interested in you. I want you to dwarf McClurg. I believe also in the cooperative plan we talked over but I'm afraid your books are costing too much to ever pay a profit to you or to me.

"Now with regard to 'Prairie Folks'. All would be simple if I had not become involved with Mr. Carpenter. The matter would stand thus. I would put in plates and share equally with you which is, of course, a thing I would not do on a new book. As the matter seems to stand you want me to put in the plates \$75 settle with Carpenter 50--Total \$125 and share equally. Which is a little hard.

"It seems to me the way out might be this:

"1st pay Carpenter \$50 and use any or none of his drawings

"2nd I'd put in the plates

"3rd make the book at not more than \$300

"Uniform with MTR Same cloth, dies, etc. and sell at \$1.25.

"4th Push the book quite like a new book.

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383. From the original letter in the Yale University Library.

"5th pay me  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all profits.

"The drawings from Carpenter have arrived and I have written him that only six of them meet my approval. These are end pieces and they could be set in at a very small cost either on the bastard-title page or at the end of the stories, or not used at all.

"Of course there is an advantage in having the book uniform with the other books and if I give you 'Crumbling Idols' that should also bear substantially if not exactly the same device of corn. That should be kept my trade-mark. And wherever possible use Carpenter for designs.

"Now we come to the essays. You say you can assure me of a profit on the first edition--well now can you? As we figured on the other books they were to pay me \$187.00 on each book--the first edition exclusive of the special edition. That would be 75%. Can you assure me of that?

"Unless something definite is arrived at about cost, I am helpless. If the books cost \$650 instead of \$500 my profit is wiped out. This won't do for one who has made his start. This arrangement makes me to a certain extent (necessarily) a partner and I must know how things are going. If I let you have these books you have four of my best books and it is very important that the whole matter be carefully canvassed.

"Your books are costing too much. No one but an expert can tell the value of a book like Miller's. 'Crumbling Idols' should not cost about \$360. It is a small book. There are not above 40,000 words and I think about 36,000. Say 180 pp. at 80¢ per copy. 40¢ at out-side sic

"I don't mind saying that I have been approached by several old firms here probably New York; no place name appears on the letter for a book and that they are willing to pay unusual royalties and make unusual concessions--but I am interested in your work and I have not offered the book of essays and shall not do so until it becomes certain that we can not agree on terms. It is a very important venture and I cannot afford to run any risks on 'Crumbling Idols'.

"1st Can you assure me a profit of 15% or \$187.50 on first edition?

"2nd Can you sell a limited edition?

"3rd Do you intend to make it uniform with the other books?

"4th Do you expect to make headquarters in Chicago during the year? These questions are important. I hope they will not seem out of place. I think you can not blame me for taking great care about this book. I confess to being very much distracted about the matter just when I am swamped with demands for stories and essays.

"Carpenter is making a frontispiece. I wrote him to hold one until I had reached a decision as to 'Prairie Folks.' If you could put into his hands any designing or other work he would feel resigned to the matter with the \$50. Which would pay for the absolute trouble to which I have put him. He would make a fine office man if you need any such work--or a salesman.

"Send me any special reviews you receive. I'll return them at once. I had a nice letter from Gilder who likes the whole. I'm going to give Stedman a copy--unless you sent him one.

"Yours sincerely

"Hamlin Garland."384

Two days later, on January 18, Garland wrote a singularly revelatory letter, especially in the great light it throws on the changes which were taking place in his career at this time:

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"Your strong enthusiastic letter pleased me very much. There is a chance to do great and fine things in Chicago and I'm glad you see it. You will take rank as the only house in the city where original work is put into artistic dress. You can't do a better thing than to establish a snug little office and sales room and make Carpenter your genteel salesman and representative. . . .

"Now I think you may go ahead on both books. I didn't mean to restrict you particularly as to exact plans but approximately. I don't agree with you entirely concerning the effect of my 'Crumbling Idols.' The effect of 'Prairie Songs' is going to be very great in way of correcting any narrow view of my work. Making [sic] 'Crumbling Idols' date 1st of April and the effect of the verse will have been very wide. Moreover I find Stedman, Janvier and many others in full sympathy with me in my attempt to break the bonds.

"Then again I am ready to send out purely literary books hereafter. I shall not repeat either my economic writing or this literary and art reform. Having said my say I shall proceed on sic other things. . . .

"If things move forward so that you become practically my publisher you need not fear repetitious or monotonous work. You don't know my plans and resources. I don't feel piqued at all over your frank suggestions. I read them to my brother and he smiled. He knows me better. . . .

"Yours sincerely

"Hamlin Garland"385

An undated note, evidently written soon after the foregoing letter likewise indicates, among other things, Garland's desire to turn away from polemical writing:

"Dear Mr. Stone:

"It occurs to me that it is imperative that we have a page of the essays give the names of my other books and also some of the critical opinions for this reason. It will provoke controversy and will be read by people who do not know the names of my books and weight will be added to these essays by the evidence of my successful work. It could be a very handsome page with lines of comment from Mr. Howells, Mr. Stedman, Prof. Boyeson, etc. Using only names of that sort.

"I know it looks better not to have those things in and yet it seems to me best in this case.

"This will close my controversial work for the present. My next book can be two very strong and artistic novellets or a vol. of short stories of my very best but it seems to me necessary just now to see what can be done by a smart discussion of the question of a real American literature.

"Yours sincerely,

"Hamlin Garland."386

Crumbling Idols was being set up by the printers in January,

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385. Also lent by Scribner's Book Store, New York. The italics are Garland's.

386. From the original owned by Scribner's Book Store.

as unpublished letters from the writer to his publishers indicate.

"Dear Native Regions"

Meanwhile, Garland was busily engaged in getting his aging parents settled at West Salem, in a homestead which he and his brother had bought for them.<sup>387</sup> This made it possible for him to return home often after his forays as a lecturer and writer. Chicago he considered his headquarters, however; and some time in the spring of 1894 he took up residence at 474 Elm Street.<sup>388</sup>

On February 17, he wrote a postal card to Stone & Kimball, from West Salem:

"All proof in. I have read it and forwarded it to New York to be read by my brother. It will come back to me and then go to you for page proof. I don't want to be hurried about this book. It must be perfectly proof-read. I am to lecture here Monday and on Wed. return to Chicago. You can write in care Schulte. I shall go in there once per day."

Schulte was acting as the western representative of Stone & Kimball.<sup>389</sup>

The desire to make his family comfortable, to bring his father and mother and himself freedom from the spectre of poverty, drove Garland on from day to day. He intensified his search for lecture dates, issuing an elaborate brochure on his "Eighth Lecture Season." He tried to enlist the help of his publishers in the distribution of circulars among "the best people." An undated letter to Stone reads in part:

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387. A Son of the Middle Border, 461, 467.

388. Garland's extant letters bearing this address begin in April.

389. Kramer, op. cit., 19.



"I don't think you 'get onto' my idea yet. I am to lecture in Chicago at the Newberry Library. 1000 letters are sent out by my agents to the best people of the city. My proposition was that you furnish the little circular such as I suggested and that I would get Miss Buell (my agent) to send them out. I have not heard from her but expect to do so soon.

"I had also thought that the same thing could be used in my general lecturing of which I am to do a great deal next year.

"I do not propose to urge the matter at all. If its commercial advantage does not appeal to you that ends it. . . .

"Sincerely yours

"Hamlin Garland"<sup>390</sup>

Other unpublished notes show that Stone & Kimball helped him with the circulars on Garland's insistence that his lecturing, besides adding to his income, would also increase the sale of his books.

This monetary motive was foremost in Garland's mind during those years, a motive both natural and necessary. As the improvements on the homestead proceeded under her son's hands, their pioneer mother became alarmed. "You mustn't spend your money for things like these. We can't afford such luxuries."

To this her son Hamlin replied: "Don't you worry about my money. There's more where I found this."<sup>391</sup>

The circumstances of his life made it that for Garland the spacious acres under the maples at West Salem could be no Walden. The simple life of a Thoreau was not for him. It could not be, for the reason that Garland's outlook on life and the spirit of

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390. From the original in the Yale University Library.

391. A Daughter of the Middle Border, 27.

his age were against the simplicity taught by the Concord naturalist. James Truslow Adams, in his brilliant book, Our Business Civilization, makes a point which is of pertinence here.

"In 1890 even the physical frontier was officially declared closed and ended by the government, but it made no difference, for the people were as busy and worn out as ever settling themselves in a wholly new country, the country of 'the high standard of living.'"<sup>392</sup>

Significantly, Garland wrote for The Arena an article bearing out his hearty approval of this "new country." His subject was "The Land Question and Its Relation to Art and Literature." We find him saying:

"If you would raise the standard of art in America you must raise the standard of living--that is my first proposition. . . ."

"There is no money in the writing of fiction, especially the best fiction. People can't afford to buy books, and while the struggle for food and fire is so hard they will read cheap and farcical stories."<sup>393</sup>

Raise "the common man to freedom and affluence," he pleads, and ergo, all will be well for art.<sup>394</sup>

"We must raise the standard of living to raise the standard of thinking, and to do that means attacking the supreme cause of the present low condition of living. . . . We must keep down the number of millionaires and raise the number of well-to-do."<sup>395</sup>

He concludes rhapsodically:

"O the brave future! when the mouth of hunger shall be filled and every child flushed with warmth. In the future we all hope for, there is the most beautiful drama and the most human fiction."<sup>396</sup>

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392. Adams, op. cit., 228-229.

393. The Arena, IX, January, 1894, 166. The italics are Garland's.

394. Ibid., 168.

395. Ibid., 169.

396. Ibid., 175.

Crumbling Idols, which appeared in May, 1894,<sup>397</sup> he dedicated

"To the men and women of America who have the courage to be artists."

On the fly-leaf following this dedication appear these lines of

Garland's poetry:

"To love the truth in an age of lies;  
To hold fast art when hunger cries;  
To sing love's song in spite of hate,  
Keeping his heart inviolate,--  
These are the artist's victories."

Somewhat contradictory to the idea of holding "fast art when hunger cries" is the statement in the chapter called "The Question of Success":

"But the question forced on the young writer, even when he is well disposed toward dealing with indigenous material, is, Will it pay? Is there a market for me?"<sup>398</sup>

The book contains "twelve essays on art, dealing chiefly with literature, painting and the drama." There are chapters on "Provincialism," "New Fields," "The Question of Success," "Literary Prophecy," "Local Color in Art," "The Local Novel," "The Drift of the Drama," "The Influence of Ibsen," "Impressionism," "Literary Centres," and "Literary Masters."

As one reads this book it is interesting to note the frequent favorable references to foreign writers. To Ibsen he expresses a high tribute, though warning against the imitation of him. Valdes and Veron, Bjornson and Tolstoy, he cites in support of his theories. Olive Shreiner's "strange and powerful" Preface to The Story of An

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397. Hamlin Garland's copy was inscribed "First copy at hand May 1st 1894." The book is listed in Publisher's Weekly for May 19.

398. Crumbling Idols, 33.

African Farm he sees fit to quote in part.<sup>399</sup>

To express his idea of the fictional art he coined the words veritist and veritism. Parrington has described this theory of Garland's as "realism modified by the local-color school, by French impressionism, and by Whitman--intensely individualistic, ardently social, and militantly democratic."<sup>400</sup> As Garland himself writes:

"You asked about the word veritist. It may be that I coined the word to express the art which lies between impressionism and realism. My method was to write the impressions which any phase of life made on me and then to VERIFY it. I was never a realist in the sense used by the French and other Continental writers who seemed to imply that realism could concern itself only with seduction, adultery, incest and crime. Impressionism was nearer to my own method but I wanted to go a little deeper, and that came with the process of verifying my impressions."<sup>401</sup>

In Crumbling Idols we read:

"The realist or veritist is really an optimist, a dreamer. He sees life in terms of what it might be, as well as in terms of what it is; but he writes of what it is, and at his best, suggests what is to be, by contrast. . . . He aims to hasten the age of beauty and peace by delineating the ugliness and warfare of the present; but ever the

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399. Crumbling Idols, 110. Garland frequently spoke of Olive Shreiner's Preface and its deep effect on his writing. The part which he reproduced is as follows: "Human life may be painted according to two methods. There is the stage method. According to that, each character is duly marshalled at first and ticketed. We know with an immutable certainty that at the right crises each will reappear, act his part, and when the curtain falls all will stand before it bowing. There is a sense of satisfaction in this and completeness. But there is another method, the method of the life we lead. Here nothing can be prophesied. There is a strange coming and going of feet. Men appear, act, and react upon each other and pass away. When the crisis comes, the man who would fit it does not appear. When the curtain falls, no one is ready. . . . Life may be painted according to either method, but the methods are different. The canons of criticism that bear upon the one, cut cruelly across the other."

400. Parrington, Main Currents of American Thought, III, 293.

401. Letter to Eldon Hill, February 23, 1939.

converse of his picture rises in the mind of the reader. He sighs for a lovelier life. He is tired of warfare and diseased sexualism, and Poverty the mother of Envy. He is haggard with sympathetic hunger, and weary with the struggle to maintain his standing place on his planet, which he conceives was given to all as the abode of peace. With this hate in his heart and this ideal in his brain the modern man writes his stories of life. They are not always pleasant, but they are generally true, and always they provoke thought."<sup>402</sup>

As Parrington observes this "is an excellent self-portrait of the young realist of that early time when all the rebellions of his blood cried out for expression."<sup>403</sup>

The strong nationalistic note of the book was, as Garland admitted to the present writer, little more than a restatement of Emerson and Whitman. "And yet it provoked comment, which is what I wished, after all," he added.

The New York Tribune, calling him "A Western Image-Breaker," asserted:

"He wants Oshkosh to have its own standard and the school boys of Red Earth to be freed from slavery to Addison.

"The East has produced a literature which has the respectful attention of the world, but it does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Garland that its universities, at which he scoffs, and its deeper general culture have anything to do with this result.

"With the zeal of a new convert he starts out to subdue all the world to some very old theories."<sup>404</sup>

An even more unfavorable review appeared in The Literary World. After referring to Garland's ingratitude to "his best public--the East," the anonymous writer continues:

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402. Crumbling Idols, 52-53. Quoted in Parrington, 294.

403. Loc. cit.

404. New York Tribune, May 20, 1894, 14.

"There is an amusing side to Mr. Garland's summons to Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, and the rest to abdicate in favor of--well, he does not plainly tell us the names. The cowboy is a picturesque and attractive figure even when he parades as a critic; but the obdurate gods do not turn pale when his cyclonic halloo falls upon their ears. . . .With the ineffable sympathy of long experience they smile at the young giant, learning the rudiments of criticism, who mounts the throne and dictates to the centuries what they shall admire."<sup>405</sup>

But two letters from Howells and one from John Burroughs, referring to Crumbling Idols, must have been consoling and heartening:

"40 W. 59th St.  
May 30, 1894

"My dear Garland:

"I am glad to have a word from you before I sail.

"You are getting plenty of abuse from the critics these days, but you are getting respect, too. They all know there is an honest seeker inside your book, and a strong one. You go further than I do, but you are in the right way, and you will arrive! You have arrived, in fact. . . .

"I will remember you to all the good fellows over there, and I should be glad if I were already back telling you what fine things they said of you. I am anticipatively homesick.

"Yours ever

"W. D. Howells."<sup>406</sup>

"40 West 59th St.,  
Oct. 28, 1894.

"My dear Garland:

"The kites that draw the electricity are the kites that go up. The kites that say down are safe. You have written

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405. The Literary World, XXV, June 2, 1894, 164-165.

406. From the original letter in Hamlin Garland's files. Quoted in Mildred Howells, Life in Letters of William Dean Howells, II, 51.

a book that has made people talk against it; if it were not a strong book they would not talk of it. Of course it was very bold, and it was largely true, and people like neither courage nor truth; yet they are the things that are worth while. You will not lose either--I know you!--I meant to have answered your letter long ago, but I have been troubled in heart and mind; and I hate to write letters, anyway. Nothing makes me write this but the hope of having another from you, and a long one. I miss you abominably, but I think you have done well to go back to your native air. This past year during my several visits home, I have felt a curious longing to remain in Ohio; I would willingly go back to Jefferson and live there. Nowhere but in the West can you have life on metropolitan terms in the country: you are no more elbowed in Jefferson than you are in New York. I would like to talk politics with you, and find out what you think of the situation. Will there be any populist gains? I don't believe the party progresses in the East, but it shall not fall back by my vote. The Socialists, on the other hand are really going ahead. The campaign against Tammany is in the economic conditions, and that as soon as they kill this one another will spring up. -- There has been talk of a new magazine here, but it seems to have blown over. I see no one; and I never know the literary gossip. Now and then Boyesen drops in, and we have a talk. -- We have been trying hard to find a village house not too far from New York, where we could gradually close up, and live cheaply, if need be; but we have not succeeded. I want a place that I can flee to, from time to time, and finally make a home of. -- I have written one short story, and am at work on another: both on Shaker ground. I think you will like them -- My daughter sailed from Liverpool yesterday, and we expect to have her with us next Saturday. -- I would like to talk with you about my father; I can't write. -- My wife sends best regards.

"Yours affectionately

"W. D. Howells."407

John Burroughs, whose great admiration for Emerson and Whitman, gave him a predilection for the views expressed in *Crumbling Idols*, wrote:

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407. From the original of this unpublished letter in Hamlin Garland's files.

"West Park, N. Y.  
June 4, '94.

"Dear Garland:

"Your little vol. of essays came to me in due time, and was my companion on a little pilgrimage to my old home the last ten days of May. I read it with satisfaction and shall read much of it again. It deepens and confirms convictions of my own. You are spreading the true literary gospel and I trust will continue to preach it both by precept and example.

"As for your art scheme as per prospectus I do not take much stock in that, and had rather not have any of its burdens thrown upon me. The talk about art does not signify much: make the work, that tells. Let us pray that the West may be creative and not critical. With thanks and best wishes I am

"Sincerely yours

"John Burroughs"408

During this summer Garland began to set down notes for a book which he was to publish five years later--Boy Life on the Prairie. That is indeed the title under which he jots down the following ideas in one of his 1894 notebooks:

"Begin by describing the night ride in a prairie schooner.

"My earliest recollections seem to be of winter--though possibly I remember the song of the frogs down in the marsh as I leaned between my father's knees as he sat on the doorstep.

"The stars came out of the blue one by one and my sister counted them, while the frogs trilled--their voices shaking me deep into my inherited memories.

"My next recollection is winter. I have a new sled and new boots with red tops. A neighbor's boy passes in a sleigh and he takes an apple out of a barrel and throws it and it bores a round smooth hole into the white bank of snow.

"I have another vivid remembrance. I am lost on the hills which seem mountains to me.--I and my baby brother.



We are barefooted and rattlesnakes are on the ledges. We are after the cattle and darkness has overtaken us. We are both wailing in low voices. I am seven--he is five. The grass beside the path reaches over our heads and we cannot hear the cow-bell. It seems to me we are in the midst of illimitable space and surrounded by bears and snakes as indeed we were.

"At last we hear the familiar bell and come upon good matronly old Cherry and with wild voices we urge her toward home. We feel better at once for her feet tramp away snakes and she knows the way home. We follow behind her cracking heels with terror but with hope. We feel a frightful return of fear, however, when the cattle begin to shy out of the path and we think of bears. Our hearts seem to cease beating for a moment. Then we hear father's voice calling and we are safe. He takes up brother in his arms and I patter along down the hill-side and across the meadow to the house where supper waits and mother and sleep in our trundle bed . . . . "409

The notes continue for ten pages farther in this reminiscent vein. It was from such impressions that his Middle Border chronicles, the best work he was to do in the twentieth century, were written.

In August he made another trip into the mountains of Colorado, filling his notebooks with observations of scenes and people, with lists of the specific names of flowers and trees peculiar to the region, all with an evident idea of future use. "This trip will come each day to be more significant and beautiful to me," he notes, "as I go back to the city--to the heat and smoke of the city.

"I am jealous of it. I would not have that land profaned. I could see it peopled again by the Indians but I hope that few tourists will see it. I want only the understanding eye to see it. I want only the sensitive ear to hear its harmonies.

"It has revealed to me the possibilities of the mts. I look upon them with different eyes--They have their soft

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409. From the original MS. notebook, 1894.

and serene places. They are not all cliffs and barren red rock--They have everything. They have almost all heights and therefore all flora of the middle America."<sup>410</sup>

Nine pages of the 1894 notes are filled with ideas and suggestions with reference to the characters, plot, and setting for a story called "Grub-Staker of Cripple Creek." This points unmistakably to the work which was to go into such a book as They of the High Trails (1916).

To help put some of the principles of Crumbling Idols into practice Garland joined actively during 1894 in the organization of the Central Art Association of America, whose headquarters were in Chicago. The ambitious purpose of this Association was that of "promoting the art interests of the country through the encouragement of original American art among the artists, and the extension of art education among the people."<sup>411</sup> Garland was president of the Association and Lorado Taft, first vice-president.<sup>412</sup> It was characteristic of Garland to give his time and energy to this enterprise. No one could have been more eager than he to give respectability to the professions of the arts and to aid in achieving wide appreciation of literature and drama, music and sculpture, among Americans.

Late this year Garland contributed a novelette, "The Land of the Straddle-Bug," to the Chap-Book, a little magazine which young Herbert Stone had founded in Chicago.<sup>413</sup> Garland was impressed

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410. MS. notes, "White River Plateau, 1894."

411. The Arts, (organ of the Central Art Association), III, April, 1894, 2.

412. Loc. cit.

413. "The Land of the Straddle-Bug" appeared in successive issues from November 15, 1894 to February 15, 1895, inclusive.

and heartened by this artistic periodical.<sup>414</sup> It had tone. It had esthetic quality. Among its contributors were George Bernard Shaw, Israel Zangwill, Max Beerbohn, and William Archer. It published illustrations by Audrey Beardsley, the exotic London artist.

When Herbert Stone, just out of Harvard, lectured him, Garland listened. "You started right, Mr. Garland, but you've gone wrong. . . You're a bit of the preacher where you should be only the artist. The Arena was all very well once, but you need a different kind of publishing now. You must write for the Chap-Book and forget your 'cause."<sup>415</sup>

Garland agreed. "He was right. My reforming zeal had led me astray."<sup>416</sup>

The December, 1894, Arena printed a story of Garland's entitled "A Woman in the Camp: A Christmas Sketch," which was utterly different from anything else of his which that magazine had published.

Nevertheless, he continued to give his intellectual assent to the Single Tax. On January 5, 1895, he gave a lecture on this subject in Englewood, a suburb of Chicago, and on January 8 he repeated it at Ravenswood.<sup>417</sup>

But a more insistent concern at this time was still the "boosting" of western art and western literature with Chicago at its center. Gradually he formed close friendships with Lorado

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414. Roadside Meetings, 277.

415. Ibid., 277-278.

416. Loc. cit.

417. MS. notebook, 1895.

Taft, Henry B. Fuller, Melville Stone (father of Herbert), Ralph Clarkson, Charles Francis Brown, and other leaders of the city's cultural life.<sup>418</sup> He continued his promotion of the Central Art Association, calling the attention of the public to the paintings of native artists like T. C. Steele of Indiana and John J. Enneking of Boston.<sup>419</sup>

In response to an appeal for pictures to exhibit at the Chicago Art Institute his friend Enneking wrote:

"Boston Art Club  
Dec. 31st 1894

"My dear Garland -

"I wish you a happy New Year!

"But the devil take you for a schemer. I wish I could do as you want me to, if only to show you how way off you are on advising an artist to go to any expense to have an exhibition these times. Every artist here or in New York who tried exhibitions has failed--Appleton, Brown, Child, Hassam, and several others who had exhibitions in Boston at Richards on Park street, I hear, did not pay expenses. But to please you I would have sent you a number if I could have got them ready by the time mentioned. If you received my last letter you must have seen that I have been 'under the weather' for months--The last ten months my work has been below par--I want to send you something good when I do send so that you have no excuses to make for it--I am quite well again and hope to paint better pictures than ever. . . ."420

Later in the year Garland again appealed to Enneking for paintings and the artist's reply betrays his fear that Garland be led aside from his ideals as a literary reformer:

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418. Roadside Meetings, 262, 268.

419. Brochure of the Association in Hamlin Garland's files.

420. From the original unpublished letter in Garland's files.

"Hyde Park Mass.  
Oct. 25th 1895

"My dear Mr. Garland --

"Your letter of a week ago came to hand during my absence--I am still sketching out of doors.

"Your kind invitation to send you a few pictures I will accept with pleasure, although I can not do anything about it for a week or ten days--I hope to stay out until the 10th of next month. I hope to paint better pictures than I did last year for I feel a great deal better.

"I hope you are doing well and at the same time progressing in your chosen field--Dont let prosperity loosen [sic] your grip on the heart of things--keep on striking hard blows in the cause of Freedom for the White race.

"Yours very sincerely

"John J. Enneking

"When do you want the pictures? All send love."<sup>421</sup>

Howells likewise was concerned with what was becoming of his protegé.

"40 West 59th St.,  
April 28, 1895.

"Dear Garland:

"Of course I take your letter<sup>422</sup> right, and I am proud of the affection which I know it comes from, and which I hold dearer than praise. But I must be what from time to time I can, and no one else can plan for me; I can't even carry out my own plans. Can you yours? -- It is true that New York journalizes; I'm always saying that. But I accept the conditions and mean to work in them for the Good, True & Co. You will like my new dep't in Harper's Weekly, and you will see that I shall serve God in it. -- For the present, -- 'We are ruined by English cheap labor' in fiction, and we must do what we can to make a living. -- I have just begun a story, a novel for the Weekly, in which I study the

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421. Ibid.

422. Unfortunately Garland's letter, if it exists, has not become available.

growth of a brute boy into a pretty good man. You'll like it.

"What are you doing, old man? Not merely criticising the fat elderly chaps in the procession, I hope? -- I haven't seen anything of yours in print, lately. Do you know that good fellow Darrow, who helped defend Debs before the Supreme Court? He's important, and solid; most interesting.

"Love to you.

"W. D. Howells."423

At this time Garland was hard at work, between lecturing trips and visits with his parents, in putting a novel into final shape for Stone & Kimball. This was Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, a story of Wisconsin and Chicago, on which he had been engaged in his spare time during 1894.<sup>424</sup> In fact, he had begun making notes on the novel in the summer of 1893 while staying in a Chicago hotel. An undated entry<sup>425</sup> in his 1893 MS. notebook follows:

"Rose Adolescence.

"From 10 to 15 was a period of fundamental experience. She developed the desires of the woman without her restraining modesty. She did unnamable things mainly out of a curiosity. She ranged through every experience within her reach. She inquired into everything she saw. She would not be hushed or turned aside.

"She fed potato bugs to toads and being interested in their tongues held them and pried their mouth open while her companions cried out in horror. She squeezed grasshoppers to see them emit green froth, and work their mandibles. She watched animals giving birth to young and ran to her father with a dozen questions concerning the great mystery. She was strong and brown and generally dirty with the dirt of the fields--good wholesome dirt."

423. Unpublished letter in Garland's files.

424. A holograph inscription by Hamlin Garland in Eldon Hill's copy of Rose of Dutcher's Coolly. Also A Daughter of the Middle Border. 19.

425. The position of these notes points to the summer dating.

This passage, expanded and greatly modified, went into Chapter III (entitled "Dangerous Days") of the novel.<sup>426</sup>

"As spring [1895] came on," he tells us, "I again put 'Rose' in my trunk and hastened back to West Salem in order to build the two-story bay-window which I had minutely planned, which was, indeed, almost as important as my story and much more exciting."<sup>427</sup>

He was finding "the smoke and the iron clangor of Chicago irksome"<sup>428</sup> and the task of embodying the life of the city difficult. "After nine years of life in Boston, the city by the lake seemed depressingly drab and bleak, and my only hope lay in representing it not as I saw it, but as it appeared to my Wisconsin heroine who came to it from Madison and who perceived in it the mystery and the beauty which I had lost."<sup>429</sup>

It was appropriate, as he once remarked, that his novel be written partly in West Salem and partly at his Elm Street home, since his heroine's life began in the Coulee region and led her finally to Chicago.<sup>430</sup>

"The scene of Rose of Dutcher's Coolly," he recalled, "is Burnham Valley, which lies east and north of West Salem on the road to Bangor. The town to which Rose went to see the circus was Sparta. 'Bluff Siding' is West Salem."<sup>431</sup>

The novel was entered for copyright on September 19,<sup>432</sup> but

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426. Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, Chicago, 1895, 22-23.

427. A Daughter of the Middle Border, 26-27.

428. Ibid., 13.

429. Ibid., 26.

430. The New York Herald, June 4, 1922, 10.

431. Unpublished letter from Hamlin Garland to Mrs. Mary Easton, La Crosse, Wis., "June 1st," n. y.

432. No. 62730 in records of the Registry of Copyrights, Library of Congress.

the book was not put on the market until December.<sup>433</sup> Simultaneously with Rose, Stone & Kimball also published their edition of Prairie Folks as a revised reprint of the Schulte edition of 1893. Its format and binding were uniform with those of the novel, the cover being a darker green in color and a larger size than were the first three books of Garland's which these publishers issued.

Of all those who commented on the novel perhaps James M. Barrie wrote most appreciatively when he said in a letter:

"133, Gloucester Road, S.W.  
22 Sept. '96

"Dear Mr. Garland,

"I thank you heartily for your book which only reached me this week. It is certainly the best novel I have read for a long time, and I expect when Mason [the chief male character] publishes his novel he will find himself forestalled. Rose herself is the triumph of the book, very subtle and fresh. That is a beautiful scene where they find the old father in grief. I am coming to America in a few days and you give me a keen desire to see Chicago, which had seemed too far afield for us. If possible we shall go now. In any case I hope to meet you.

"Yours truly,

"J. M. Barrie"<sup>434</sup>

And English editor, W. T. Stead, of The Review of Reviews (London) was enthusiastic, as these words from a personal letter to an American acquaintance show:

"By the bye, do you happen to have read Hamlin Garland's book 'Rose of Dutcher's Coolly'. I have been particularly struck with it and think it a remarkable representation of

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433. Kramer, op. cit., 233.

434. From the original letter in Garland's files. It is published in Roadside Meetings, 326.



much that is best in American life. You possibly know Garland. If you should meet him give him my respects and tell him I am much taken with his book and am praising it warmly in the REVIEW."<sup>435</sup>

The reviewers of Rose were divided in their attitudes. Probably the most scathing comment appeared in the New York Tribune. To quote:

"A false method and a coarse mind have combined to destroy whatever merits the story unfolded by Hamlin Garland in 'Rose of Dutcher's Couilly' may have possessed. A charming and interesting history--the growth of a young girl's mind and her gradual evolution from a simple country maid is a theme which might well prove tempting to a student of psychological processes and a graceful literary artist. But Mr. Garland is neither one nor the other. His style is turgid, strained, and forced; his psychology materialistic and vicious. Life to him is a series of purely physical and psychological sensations closely identified with sex."<sup>436</sup>

The Critic compared the book with Thomas Hardy's "latest novel." In the words of the reviewer, "We are bound to say, after reading both books, that 'Rose of Dutcher's Couilly' leaves a more disagreeable taste in the mouth than 'Jude the Obscure.'"<sup>437</sup> Yet The Critic was willing to note some good in Garland's novel:

"What he may have in store for us in the future, no one can say; but we are willing to agree that there is a measure of maturity and a consciousness of strength about this story which mark a certain stage of achievement. Of course, it is realistic to a degree; of course, it reminds us here of Zola, there of Mr. Howells: but its realism is a hearty, vivid, flesh-and-blood realism, which makes it readable even to those who disapprove most conscientiously of many things in it."<sup>438</sup>

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435. Letter from Stead to H. D. Lloyd, Winnetka, Illinois. The original is in Garland's files.

436. April 19, 1896, 26.

437. The Critic, Feb. 8, 1896, 4.

438. Loc. cit.

Even Howells's review was preponderantly unfavorable:

"I cherish with a grateful sense of the high pleasure they have given me Mr. Garland's splendid achievements in objective fiction. In that sort his stories, Main Travelled Roads, are monumental, but Rose of Dutcher's Coolly is not wholly in that sort. The scheme of it has apparently been so dear to the author, the lesson he wished to convey has seemed so important, that he has somewhat sacrificed the free movement of his characters to them; he has not wholly taken his hand from them; he has not let them go their own gait; they act from his hypnotic suggestion.

"That is, at times. At other times they have their being free of him, or apparently free of him, for at best this freedom of one's creatures is as illusion which one must strive by all means to produce, but which is still only the finest illusion. There is a frankness in his portrayal of the rustic conditions which Rose springs from, very uncommon in our fiction, and there is an acknowledgment of facts and influences usually blinked. But along with this valuable truth there is a strain of sentimentality which discredits it; and the reader is left in an uncertainty as to the author's meaning in one essential which is at least discomfiting."<sup>439</sup>

J. E. Chamberlin, on the contrary, had only praise in his Boston Transcript review:

"Of course it is all a matter of taste; the Listener's taste is very bad, in the opinion of the Springfield Republican; it is so bad that he prefers this minute and vivid record of the growth of a great-hearted and great-bodied girl out of the Wisconsin soil up through the murk of Chicago air, to the elegant depicting of the labored predicaments of preposterous heroes in medieval dungeons. . . The Listener sees no reason why the Springfield Republican should care very much, for 'Rose of Dutcher's Coolly'; nor yet does he see why certain editors should make a national issue of Hamlin Garland, and war against him as if it [sic] were a fugitive slave law or a Bland bill or a McKinley tariff act. . . ."<sup>440</sup>

W. P. Trent, in the Bookman, gave a highly favorable analysis in which he indicated that Garland was comparable to Thomas Hardy.<sup>441</sup>

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439. William Dean Howells, "Life and Letters," Harper's Weekly, January 20, 1896, 223.

440. Boston Transcript, January 29, 1896.

441. The Bookman, II, February, 1896, 512-514.

He was like Hardy in one respect at least--his resentment of the acrid reception which greeted his novel. But it would be easy to exaggerate the importance of outcry against Rose in turning Garland's mind away from the scenes and subjects of the Middle Border. As we have seen, the shift of his fictional interest towards the life of the western mountains began as early as 1891 and his notebooks of his trips to Colorado, New Mexico, and other states in the Far West were filled with notes for stories and sketches.<sup>442</sup>

Moreover, his unpublished letters to Albert Bigelow Paine, written from September to November before the publication of the novel, show that Garland was already interested in publishing stories of the mountain West. Paine was at that time engaged in conducting a newspaper syndicate.

On September 6, 1895, from West Salem, Garland wrote:

"Dear Mr. Paine:

"I have but just returned from the Rocky Mts. that explains my delay and also why I could not see you. I expect to be in New York this fall some time in September but I can not tell exactly. I shall be glad to confer with you if I can be of any use.

"Very sincerely

"Hamlin Garland"<sup>443</sup>

Two months later he again wrote:

"474 Elm St.

"Dear Mr. Paine:

"I have some articles concerning my summer trip which I

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442. See supra, 151 .

443. The letters of Garland to Paine are the property of Eldon Hill.

should like to have you experiment with rather than with my stories. Later I might try you on the stories. I have an article which ought to make a good special for Thanksgiving. I enclose it.

"Please give it immediate attention for I think I have a place for it in case you cant use it.

"Very sincerely

"Hamlin Garland

"Nov. 4/95 I should realize \$80 from this sketch. I mention this to give you a basis."

On November 10, he wrote, "I am in a welter of proof-reading on my new novel and can hardly think of anything else."

The remaining letters to Paine in this year all relate to matters of publishing his articles, chiefly on the Indians, through the Syndicate. Among the sketches which he mentions as being ready are "Among the Utes," "The Dance at Acoma," "The Snake Dance at Walpi," "A Day at Islita," "Glimpses of the Navajo," and "A Night in the Grand Canyon."<sup>444</sup>

In the December, 1895, issue of The Atlantic Monthly, its editor, Horace Elisha Scudder, wrote of Garland.<sup>445</sup> Taking, on the whole, a supercilious attitude, Scudder yet concedes to Garland a certain strength and worth. Briefly he recounts the author's life, on which he comments:

"The simple record is significant of courage, persistence, and ability. On the one hand it explains and makes pardonable the manifest deficiencies in his knowledge and taste, and on the other the strong grip he has

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444. Unpublished letter to Albert Bigelow Paine, November 18, 1895.

445. "New Figures in Literature and Art, III., Hamlin Garland," The Atlantic Monthly, LXXVI, December, 1895, 840-844.

upon the realities of certain phases of American life."<sup>446</sup>

Main-Travelled Roads Scudder calls "unique in American literature; passionate, vivid, written with absolute certainty of touch, native and virile as the red man." He says further of it:

"The best proof of the solid merit of Main-Travelled Roads is that, in spite of all, it convinces the reader, willy-nilly, of its general fidelity to fact, and lifts him off his critical feet by its sheer brute force. It is his highest achievement, and, ominously, also his first. It shows strikingly what may be done by strong native talent working with the help of a single sound formula for effective composition; for here most emphatically Mr. Garland has written of what he knows."<sup>447</sup>

In seeing The Atlantic devote an article to him and his work, the young man who had arrived at the old Hoosac station in Boston eleven years before, the dust of the Dakota plains upon him and within him a burning ambition, could take satisfaction. He had made a name for himself. He had won the respect and the confidence of important men such as Whitman and Howells. He had demonstrated to his father that one could make money with the pen as well as with the husking-peg. Yet the monetary return from his books was by no means enough. He felt the need to find more lucrative fields. He yearned "to arrive."<sup>448</sup>

A "son of the Middle Border" was also a son of "the Gilded Age." By the end of the year 1895, he was no longer concerned with delineating the life he knew best. His deep passion for social justice among the prairie farmers and their wives had cooled more than a little. The rebellious outcry was all but

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446. Ibid., 841.

447. Ibid., 842. The italics are the present writer's.

448. Cf. Matthew Josephson, Zola and His Time, New York, 1928, 76.

silent. Even the desire to draw upon his early memories for the materials of his fiction had gone from him forever. In turning the Middle Border to the larger uses of the novel he assisted only in breaking the ground; the cultivating and the harvesting he left to other hands.

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## APPENDIX A

[To indicate the extent of the scholarly research which Hamlin Garland devoted to his The Evolution of American Thought, the following transcription of his bibliographical notes attached to the MS. lectures is presented.]

Some of the principal works consulted in this writing --

Spencer	-- Essays. Sociology. Etc.
Taine	-- English Literature.
H. M. Posnett	-- Comparative Literature.
John Fiske	-- Reviews, Historical Essays.
M. C. Tyler	-- American Literature.
E. C. Stedman	-- Poets of America.
M. Philorets Chasle	-- Literature in America.
J. B. McMaster	-- Hist. American People.
Edward Dowden	-- Studies in Literature.
De Tocqueville	-- Democracy in America.
Whitman	-- Prefaces and Democratic Vistas.
Nichol	-- American Literature.
Richardson	-- American Prose.
Lanier	-- English Novel.
Lanier	-- Science of English Verse.
Ripley	-- Transcendentalism.
Conway	-- Emerson.
Parker Pillsbury	-- Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles.
Duychinck	-- Encyclopedia of American Literature.
Griswold	-- Writers of America. 3 vols.



Lodge	-- Colonies.
A. H. Welsh	-- Development of English Literature
Edgar Poe	-- Marginalia.
S. L. Knapp	-- Lectures on American Literature.
Erskine	-- Democracy in Europe.
Eugene Veron	-- Aesthetics.
Bancroft, Hildreth	-- History of the American Republic.
Ritter	-- Music in America.
J. J. Jorves	-- The Art Idea.
Lowell	-- Essays.
Whipple	-- Essays.
Mathews	-- Essays.
Swinburne	-- Essays.
Nordau	-- Paradoxes, Etc.

Some Critical Biographies:

Emerson --

Ripley  
Conway  
Holmes  
Cooke

Hawthorne --

Lathrop  
Fields  
James  
Julian Hawthorne

Poe --

Ingraham  
Griswold  
Mrs. Whitman  
Woodberry

Whitman --

Bucke  
O'Conner

Lounsberry -- Cooper.

Wilson -- Bryant and His Friends.

Longfellow -- Longfellow.

Some Works on the South:

Watterson  
Tougee  
Cable  
McClure  
Sala

Some Travellers:

Hamilton  
Howitt  
Murat  
Trollope  
Wright  
Rochefoucauld  
Hall  
Sutcliff  
Fidler  
Ashe  
Wild  
Kendall  
Priest  
Freeman

## APPENDIX B

[Shortly after going to Boston in 1884, Hamlin Garland conceived an ambitious series of essays which he called by the general title, "The Evolution of American Thought." Though he never fulfilled his intention of publishing them as a book, he used the chapters as lectures at the Boston School of Oratory, beginning in 1885-1886, and, among other places and times, at the Seaside Assembly, Avon-by-the-Sea, New Jersey, in 1891. As the years passed he expanded the lectures to include almost every important figure in American letters up to and including his time. In the following chapter, which is typical of the lectures, the influence of Taine and Spencer is apparent.]

### THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

It now remains for me to make a final chapter do duty for an outline study of the great present, whose thunder is in my ears and whose sufficiently bewildering complications and departments of thought and industry are crowding upon me faster than my mind can co-ordinate or my pen put into sequence of expression.

I am disposed to regard everything which we have attained in 1886 as the culmination of the forces working in the past; it is what it is, because the past was what it was, or, as another puts it: "Now America is the continent of glories and of the triumphs of freedom and of Democracies, and of the fruits of societies and of all that is begun."

The philosophy of evolution regards each moment of the world's history as the resultant of forces acting upon it at that time, that it was the only condition possible at that time; that it must have been so throughout the past, however ferocious and malevolent or ignorant any age may look to the modern man. And so the history of

America is to be regarded as the product of forces contained in the society, or acting from without. The terms race, surroundings and epoch are merely the terms used to contain these great forces. They do thus contain them because they are the broadest possible terms, including all under their respective heads.

It is possible, therefore, as I conceive it, to not only discover the laws operative in the past, and present with us now, but to extend them infinitely into the future; just as by fixing two points we posit a line undeviating and infinitely extended, so if we go deep enough, we come upon changeless laws, eternally operative.

--- "Man foretells afar  
The courses of the stars, the very hour  
He knows when they shall darken or grow bright."

And so can be foretold, broadly at least, the course of humanity and the upward sweep of its mental change. Nothing is without the grasp of law, social changes and mental advance are not causeless nor lawless -- law has absolute domain over them all. That the action of law in such phenomena is complicated and elusive is small argument for saying that social changes and mental progress cannot be in some measure grasped and other changes predicted.

Mr. Spencer in England, Haeckel in Germany, and John Fiske in America, represent a new philosophy which recognizes nothing as capricious or lawless, not even the obscurest facts of society nor individual growth. Mr. Spencer has established his philosophy and has enunciated certain fundamental laws of progress which must have guided the past, are with us now, and must inevitably proceed into the future.

I have no hesitancy in avowing my belief that until the evolution philosophy discovered this plan of the universe, no such generalization was possible, and that only when Mr. Spencer stated his fundamental generalization upon the method of the universe, did we reach the capability of logical prophecy:

"From the remotest past which science can fathom, up to the novelties of yesterday, that in which progress essentially consists is the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous."

America, therefore, and every department of her progress, must come under this law. For the principle of a comparatively simple cause producing a complex series of effects which in their turn become causes and so spread a never-ceasing heterogeneity, runs through every department of human life, just as surely, though perhaps not so perceptively as in the material universe.

It holds good in literature -- which is and ever must be the expression of the growing complexities of human life, whether in America or elsewhere -- art, science, music, poetry, come under the same law, and there is no exception.

Now all these facts and many more must be considered before one can logically infer the direction which we as a nation are likely to take in literature, religious belief, or what other department of our thought is to become considered. It appears to me in this connection: that all the known resources of science should be brought to bear upon one social organism, and upon the question, Whither are we tending? and should secure the same careful study as comparative mythology, or the history of Europe. We are the sublime experiment

of the nineteenth century -- shall we be the stupendous disaster of the twentieth? Shall we re-enact the worn-out dramas of other societies and other ages, or are we to move on to a higher plane of social equality and purity and have a literature of corresponding to, (and recording) this advance?

I do not presume to settle any such prodigious queries, but confine myself to the narrow horizon where I can see clearly certain tendencies which point to certain immediate results.

Mr. Fiske, in his essays upon American history, has shown that he is one of our clearest and most capable thinkers, and should make the study of American history include its thought, literary as well as religious and political. The changes in the social ideals would from such a hand as his assume relevancy and progression, and would undoubtedly stimulate thought upon the matter, and counteract strongly the dangerous tendencies in city life.

As I have everywhere throughout this essay kept close to those phases of American thought which have direct or indirect bearing upon what is usually called literature, so in this final chapter I will follow the same method, and as the study of past society has been facilitated by considering the primal factors in the manner of Mr. Taine, let us push on in the same general plan.

Let it be observed that neither of these terms can be used in the measure of their potency a quarter of century ago, for none of the terms are stable.

The race changes from the combined effects of all the previous factors uniting to form a new race; the environment changes in large

degree, becoming less hard and coercive and fuller of human presence; while the momentum, with constant, increasing speed, never ceases to urge on the race laden with all that the other factors in the past have achieved.

It follows, therefore, that analysis must be present; its value will depend upon the knowledge of social phenomena possessed by the writer, and upon his ability in scientific methods.

Let us turn now to the study of the year 1886 in the light of the past, trying to grasp and hold all the main threads which we have already traced to this point, and to discover their leadings.

Starting at first with a race predominantly English and comparatively civilized, in an age of religious formalism, in the midst of vast forests, surroundings wild, inhospitable and grand, what have we become and what changes have come to these primordial elements? No one will be able to say that the changes have not been more rapid, vast and fundamental than at any other age of the world's history, but the question is -- whither? Let us see.

When the American Era of settlement came it was necessarily different in its entire spirit from any settlement made in history. Its epoch, as we have seen, laid certain insuperable barriers, limitations upon our thought. It began with a civilized and c o m p a r a - t i v e l y highly cultivated race. It came in an age of religious fanaticism. Our nation had no childhood, no perspective of outlying shadow where creep and flutter the anomalous and vague.

We had not (and have not now) a homogeneous race element at any time after the first fifty years' settlement. (And the very absence

of this feeling will force upon us a new literature -- as will be shown).

The social organism, so simple at first, grew in complexity with the most unparalleled rapidity, and in place of having a common fund of inherited ideas and organic conceptions, we had all nationalities, each with a fund foreign to our land. This was inevitable, and so far from being a cause of regret is a cause for rejoicing.

Nothing could have been more foolish than the attempt to produce an epic; with no common fund of emotional ideas and barbaric conceptions, upon which to rely, it was a mistaken idea altogether. In our progress along the line from slight personality to great average individuality, from animism to rationalism, we had left behind those elements which make an epic (in the old sense) possible, and could not retrace our steps. The door of the past is closed: it will never more swing on its hinges. The tribal epoch, the feudalistic epoch, the militant aristocratic epoch, are gone. The age of democracy is actually here, and notwithstanding all gloomy prognostications, is the brighter epoch into which the world is entering.

The United States, because of favoring circumstances, has led in this great movement of the world. Comparatively free opportunity for individual and collective expansion, a germinal development, the nature of its immigration (shortly to be noted) have all contributed to the growth of equality in civil, and freedom in religious rights.

But the epoch of this world is democratic. Enormous changes may be predicated of England, who has lately enlarged the franchise, and



whose present parliament includes a score of men who have been laborers with their hands.

There is not a nation in Europe, not even the most aristocratic, which has not felt the mighty surge and mutter of the rising people. The epoch is, moreover, scientific, as well as democratic, and the advance in scientific though slow, has been sure.

The race, we have noted, ever since the colonization has steadily grown in heterogeneity, steadily more composite. From a certain class of one nation we have absorbed many classes from every nation, till we are the most heterogeneous of nations.

We are generally spoken of as Anglo-Americans, which is a sad anachronism as well as misnomer. Since the beginning of the nation to the year 1874 it is estimated that the English emigrants took up about one-eighth of the entire foreign immigration and increase, these figures including Wales. In 1880, of the whole fifty-five millions of people in the United States, fifteen millions were foreign born, or had one or both parents foreign born. Of these, less than one-seventh were from England. There were at the same time over seven million colored population, making a total of twenty-two millions who certainly had little connection to Anglo-Saxony.

If we go back into the past of the American people, we will find that fully two-thirds of the remaining number are Irish or Teutonic, and the final conclusion which we will reach is that the honor of calling the United States "daughter" is a disputed claim, not by England, but by Ireland against Germany. And while a third of our

people may trace more or less directly their line of ancestry to the English so called -- yet the Celts, as represented by the Welsh, Irish and Highland Scotch, cannot well be called Anglo-Saxon, or even English. They have held their own against the Anglo-Saxon for centuries, and have their own traditions, race peculiarities and languages, extremely well marked off from their neighbors.

The Celts, therefore, form probably the greatest number of our population. Closely bordering upon them in number are the Teutonic peoples, Germany and Scandinavia being closely related. Granting the relation of Saxon-Germany to be close, yet all the other elements of France, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, Switzerland, Wales, Spain and the farther East, make up a most astonishing mixture.

No mingling of nations ever took place, comparable to it. It would seem as though all the races, rayed out of the parent stock, after countless ages of variations, burdened with the enormous diversities of race individuality, acquired in their passage through widely separated epochs and environments, holding in their grasp fruits of all civilizations, flowers of all epochs -- it would seem as though all these had united at the end of thousands of years to form a new race, greater and more powerful than has before existed upon the earth,

It is fortunate that so optimistic a view has the support of the greatest living philosopher, otherwise it would receive an indulgent smile. I do not mean to say that this mingling is at present consummated, or that it will be reached this generation or the next. As Mr. Spencer said, the type will be longer forming, but it will be

high.

This is the broadest and most general view of the r a c e but we must go one step lower toward the particulars and study the c l a s s growth in complexity.

Here we are met by an extremely far-reaching group of facts which must be dwelt upon at length, for their leadings would take us into every department of our social life. This consideration is one upon which I have touched again and again as a vital one. We are as a race made up of the peasant classes of Europe; or, to state it scientifically, the larger part of the race-life which we have been drawing to our shores since 1620 has been relatively lower in the scale of evolution than the ruling classes who remained behind. There is no good to be gained by blinding ourselves to these facts.

By thus looking upon the matter, we clearly apprehend the most commonly misunderstood phases of our social and national life. It is not meant that all immigrants were paupers or criminals. No thinking man will deny that they have been the mightiest factors in our growth and prosperity, but that we are for the most part made up of peasant classes of Europe is indisputable. Men who are uneducated, and who carry in themselves the stultifying effects of extreme degradation and poverty.

Their individuality is low: they mass easily under the lead of demagogues. Their influence explains the venality of politics, the prevalence of liquor-rule, the low state of the drama, and the mass of unworthy books flooding the land. The whole fabric of our govern-

ment has been and is, permeated by this influence, direct or indirect. I shall be misunderstood if I am taken to mean this in crimination, or in any sense reproach. It is a fact, which the investigator cannot pass over if he would understand the causes of American crudity: the character of literature and politics and other phases of thought.

To illustrate. There are not wanting people, many of them, who mourn the degeneracy of New England, or more locally, Boston. Much is said of the growth of the evil of intemperance, in that connection and the growth of the saloon element. Croakers and certain ultra-religionists speak of the degeneracy and the correlative (to them) growth of sceptical thought; to account for a large part of the crime and drunkenness, together with the coarseness and venality of the press.

The fact would seem to be, however, that while the average intelligence and morality has possibly lowered within the last twenty-five years, such lowering, if true, is caused by the enormous increase of the immigration to Boston of lower classes of people foreign or native, and is not caused by the lowering of the standard of morals or intelligence in the native population; on the contrary, there is abundant evidence to show that it has greatly risen.

Saloons, low drama, gambling dens, and such like, do not come except on demand. This increased demand is in a very large measure due to a foreign importation, and no amount of fervid denial can carry away the repulsive fact. It is to be studied, explained, and

obviated. The same thing is seen in other parts of the nation. Fanatical writers against vice may clamor about eradicating trashy literature, drunkenness, low drama, and setting up art, literary monthlies and Shakespearian societies in their places, replacing drunkenness with sobriety, obscenity with purity, as though the whole evil emanated from the publishers, the saloon-keepers and theatrical managers, forgetting that the mass of our people are too low on the scale of intelligence to leave off drinking, support art and lectures, or read Emerson and Hawthorne.

Nothing shows this state of our society better, for example, than to read the reports of the entertainments of the city today, as advertised in the "H e r a l d":

"Miss Mary Anderson" -- legitimate drama.

"Robson and Crane, Comedy of Errors," spectacular comedy.

"D'Oyle Carte's Opera Co." -- Comic.

"Charles Clarke, 'Ten Nights in Barroom,'" -- melodrama.

"J. F. Raymond, 'Col. Sellers,'" -- Comedy.

"Dan Sully, 'Corner Grocery,'" -- low farce.

Boston Symphony Concert.

"Three Piano Recitals," Carl Farlton.

At the same time Prof. John Fiske lecturing on American History, etc. Now here is a heterogeneous mass of matter which has come upon demand, and has adequate support.

It may be fairly assumed that the various proportions of food indicates an equal variety of consumers, with the single considera-

tion, very important, of lack of funds, which hinders the support of the better art.

But below the variety shows, is the multitude of dance-halls, secret or otherwise, and the thirty-five hundred beer-saloons which properly come under the head of amusements. Thus a hint is got of the state of taste in Boston, which has the reputation of being our most intellectual city. To one or two wholesome dramas, three piano recitals, two lectures, and a concert, we have two comedies, as many farces, and three thousand and more saloons and dance-halls.

So in the country at large. If we take the single case of fiction, we get equally suggestive results. We have all grades from the obscene pamphlet secretly published, up to Hawthorne, -- each grade appealing to its special grade of intelligence, each demand being not without a supply, each supply operating in some measure to stimulate for the demand.

All this arises from the fact that we are a democracy, that most of our people are but just escaped from the centuries of deprivation and toil of the European peasant world, and in their new freedom are disposed to seize and enjoy the material benefits now attainable for the first time, and also evidence that many cannot buy to their taste.

It is not to be expected that a Swedish, German or Irish peasant, whose ancestry for centuries have trod in their dreary round of toil, whose recreations were for the most part animal or childish, a wake or a fair, to whom books were a mystery or a dry task to be

forgotten as soon as possible -- it is not to be expected such people will immediately subscribe for the "C e n t u r y," organize Wordsworth clubs, or read Hawthorne. Evolution, though marvellously swift in their cases, is not so swift as that.

Such, and no higher, have been by far the larger part of our immigrants. We have been and are an asylum, and must expect to be nurses.

These people are coming to us in swarms. Go stand at Castle Garden, or at one of the great railway station houses in Chicago, whose lines lead out into the west. See them come day after day, year after year, in droves, in thousands. See them herded like cattle, jostled, pushed, directed. See their startled faces, broad, unreasoning smiles, (the imprint of the royal seal) follow them till they debouch like some great river into the sunshine of a western prairie, Minnesota, Iowa, or wherever. Be near them a few years and you will see the mightiest transformation under our sky, the blossom of a human soul. Watch them till the first generation of children are born and educated, and you will feel a thrill of awe at the work our crude and formless nation is doing.

Much has been done, there is much that remains to do. These people in the mass are not yet where the reading of literature begins, much less the making or judging of it. They are building comfortable homes, living beyond their hopes. They are comparatively free, they eat for the most part without fear of disaster, luxuriating in the comparative warmth of their new comfort and security.

Their reading is pretty apt to be as Nordau suggests, the "offal" of fiction, mere incident and startling changes, abnormal phases of life, of the dime-library type. Their horizons are yet small and do not include aesthetics. But their judgments are momentous. All of these brief characterizations are true of large classes of our people, both in rural and urban districts.

But let us pass one step lower, and consider the best we may, the individual peculiarities of our immigrants. Here we are met by a principle which will reach widely out over the whole subject. Three thousand miles of ocean and unknown land, albeit the sun shines golden upon it, are triers of men's souls. It requires a certain sterling or adventurous quality, or some extraordinary motive force, to sunder home and self, to leave familiar scenes which are literally woven into the fibres of the heart.

The magnet draws bits of steel or iron, not wood or clay, and so a certain dominant quality will be found in these immigrants. A quick, eager, hopeful, resolute spirit fitted to amalgamate itself with its surrounding, wherever cast up -- this I believe to be noticeable in the individuals of all the races who come to our shores. Without this spirit of unrest, distrust of their home and desire to make a new one, we could not have formed the government we have. They would not be as plastic to our government as they are.

There is, however, another force acting to produce emigrants, often combined with the preceding, namely: the pressure of the home environment. This influence may consist of hunger, tyranny, or the



righteous judgments of the law and casts up criminals, paupers, political agitators, progressionists, and the like. It also sends daring thinkers, fanatics, wild visionaries, incendiaries, men with insupportable maggots in their brains. This it will be seen, as Howitt said fifty years and more ago, that the few artists, poets, lovers of the beautiful, were lost in the overwhelming flood of poor and ignorant people, which has rolled unceasingly in upon us, and today forms the largest part of our population.

Having now considered the momentum or Democratic epoch, and the race under its broad aspects, it remains to consider the environment or external pressure.

It is an undeviating law of life that all organisms tend to suit themselves to their environment, and in the lower forms of life, all that do not thus accommodate themselves to the external world, die. The law is nearly as absolute in man, both physically and intellectually. A race has the sea to explore, it first creates sailors; or a forest to fell, it teaches the swing of the axe and hardens the shoulder muscles. Commanche, bowlegged and armed like a Centaur to draw the bow, sits his horse like a part of him. The Chippewa, under the northern pines, has a step like a cat and a piercing eye and a deft hand at the paddle of the canoe. Highly civilized man alone would seem to be free from the dominion of the environment -- but he is not. Consciously or unconsciously, these external things weave into his body or soul some effect which marks their remorseless dominion over him.

The wind and the sun thicken and brown his skin like leather. The fog and hoarse wind get into his throat, the plow crooks the fingers, hardens the hands and bows the back. The cold winter benumbs his faculties, or the heat renders them torpid. The sea and the forest render him silent and superstitious, valleys render him insular -- in a thousand ways not to be enumerated is the hammerer hammered.

Before the north could settle, or ravish and pillage on the seas, it must first raise the Vikings who could laugh in the face of the foam-white wind. Just so America was to be hewed and ploughed and ransacked by railways and organized by telegraph lines, and the average American must be strong at the helve, patient at the plough, daring at the throttle, and subtler than lightning. And they came, the hardy, the stern, the practical, the savage, and the quick of expedients.

And so they have continued to be, for the frontier was always with us. For two centuries, as I have everywhere tried to show, the principal figures of American civilization have been the pioneer, the woodsman and the farmer, pushed on by landlordism into the border. Just behind this advance guard of a constant dispersion came the advance of the farming population, the millions of the spade and hammer, pushed on by the great commercial or railway corporations. At their shoulders hums the master-piece of the genius of Franklin, Morse and Edison. While in the great cities merchant princes make up the trio of American developing agencies, and the land is a roar

of activity. C o n s t a n t i m m i g r a t i o n o f p e a s -  
a n t s a n d c o n s t a n t d i s p e r s i o n o v e r  
v a s t a r e a s o f n e w t e r r i t o r y !

What think you an environment like this will foster? Poets? Dreamers? Ascetics? No, it will produce the greatest era of invention ever known. It will leap by prodigious advances into new provinces of mechanic skill. It will shake the muscle from the wind and train the earth to produce crops at the utmost and harvest them itself. It will work more changes in farming, invention, mechanics, intercommunication, printing, in fifty years than in all the three thousand of previous history -- but it does not foster poetry, especially the poetry of aristocracy.

It has its literature, but it is not of a sort to satisfy aesthetic taste. It has produced a dominant type of man -- the business man. Irresistible, restless, whose raiment fits him with no lines of grace, an all-conquering, useful man, but not a poet. Not only does this man absolutely dominate the business circles of the land, but his energy and desires react upon other departments. Who next? The politician. Who next in the line of masters? The scientific man or inventor, and so on down till you get among the caterers for amusement, and then you find the democracy's literary man.

Thus the union of social factors has not been favorable for the growth of aristocratic literature among the real centres of our people. It has produced philanthropists, pamphleteers, journalists, but not poets or artists. We are still one vast frontier, and still

building our society. We are indeed half-formed, as Professor Dowden says, and the reaction of the West and South still keeps up the demand for politicians, inventors, mathematicians, architects, tradesmen, half-educated preachers, cheap novelists and country editors, turning our young life into these channels of trade, leaving to mere diletantes [sic] the writing of exotic verse and a weak simulation of feudalistic drama.

Let us recapitulate at this point, preparatory to indicating the leadings of our lines of advance. We have noted that the epoch from a colonial age, more or less dependent upon a king, in an age of religious excitement, has passed to a relatively free and independent democratic nation. We have noted that more and more of the world's influence, cosmopolitanism, has crept in with the fullness of intercommunication. We have noted that the race, though including several nationalities, was for the most part made up of the English, and of a certain class, and the growth in heterogeneity, not only in class and nationality, but in individual character.

We have seen that the environment and an absolute democracy have laid an insuperable barrier upon literary productions of a certain character, while complete insularity and prejudice have yielded slowly and stormily to intercommunication, commerce of ideas. We have seen that the people have been largely concerned with the material world -- in short, that the factors have been working more for the production of comfort, individual growth and expansion and worldly possessions. The foundation-stages have been and passed

without finding adequate expression. May we look, as Whitman does, for a "third stage rising out of the previous ones to make them and all illustrious?"

## II.

As the history of the past of our people has been one of unparalleled growth, change, everywhere and always changes in the social elements, no one can expect things to remain as they are. If they change, what will be their direction? Will they be for the good of man? Will they be productive of art, literature? I do not doubt it.

In order to come at the problem, let us begin by asking what the race is likely to be. I have already spoken of the final solidarity of the races, as indicated by Mr. Spencer, but what will be the more immediate effect of the distribution? Before this century goes out there will be seventy millions of people in this land, if not more. In 1920 a hundred millions. Will they be integral? Will they all speak one language? I do not think so. They will retain many of their customs, much of their traditional emotions and possibly their languages, certainly their distinctive ways of thinking.

We have noted throughout the past two races rapidly out-growing the rest in numbers, the Celtic and Teutonic, using the terms, the one to include the Irish, Welsh and Scotch, the other to include the German and Scandinavian peoples. We have considered that much of the worst and most destitute class of all Europe, has found place in

our midst, but that the percentage of these orders of citizens has steadily decreased, from various causes. Among the German people especially has the increased intelligence and available means been marked.

Now we are justified in expecting that the race-life of our nation will continue its rapid rise in the scale of civilization, by the growth of its units in intelligence and variety of powers. Education, personal experience and inherited aptitudes of the past and present generations will swell the grand total, and as they rise they will re-act upon every department of our thought, upon the press, upon amusements, upon politics and creeds.

The middle west will be largely filled with Teutonic, and especially Northland people, and their genius will appear in literature, art and music. While the Celtic and Romance peoples will have powerful effect upon the east and south, and especially the large cities, keeping sensationalism rife among certain departments of amusements, but with slow but gradual improvement. The sensational story papers will still continue, as well as the farce, the dance-hall, and the like, but they must finally be eliminated as their supporters rise higher above the brute needs and tastes.

The Indian is passing away, not so the Negro. He is here as a part of our system, and he will stay. He is increasing very nearly as fast as the white, and when his condition improves is likely to increase in a higher ratio. But as the rate of immigration is added to the national increase of the white, the black will never become an overwhelming force in society.

His development will go on in a relatively very rapid rate. The growing heterogeneity of his relations and surroundings are sure to produce correlative changes in his mental world. It has already done so.

Says Campbell: "The white serfs of European countries took hundreds of years to rise to the level which these negroes have attained in a dozen. Such has been the thoroughness of the measures adopted in America. . . . It is of no value to test the negro with the white man's ability."

Frederick Douglass puts it still more forcibly: "We are not to measure the progress of the colored race in this country from the heights that you, my good Anglo-Saxon brothers, have attained with your 2000 years of civilization; we are not to be measured from your point, but from the depths from which we have come. The marvel is not that the black man has made so little progress, but that he has made so much."

The doctrine of evolution changes the whole manner of looking upon the negro and his attainments. "They will soon be able to compare favorably not only with the Indian Ryot, the Russian serf, the Irish tenant farmer, but also with the Dorsetshire laborer," says Campbell, after a close study of every phase of the negro's life. These are great words. Again he says: "It is customary to execrate the rather loose morality of the negro. This is a mistake. They had the usual loosely banded families in Africa, and were not allowed to form families under slavery, and it is most surprising that so

much morality is found among them. The family is a novelty to them. . . . All that is now wanted to make the negro a fixed and conservative element in American society is to give him encouragement to and facilities for making himself a small land-owner."

The south is beginning to feel that they have a great force in the negro, if rightly used, and the best of our public men anticipate no serious drawback in the fact that the negro is a part of us. In short, his rise to the level of modern civilization will be as much more swift than that of ancient barbaric tribes, as his surroundings excel in complexity and force the surroundings of ancient peoples.

The South must accept the negro as a fact, and assist in educating him just as the North has incorporated and tried to educate the peasant of the old world. The task may well be called herculean, but it can be done, it must be done.

More than this, the negro is even now entering literature as a subject, as we have noted. He will soon enter it as a writer -- it is inevitable. He will give a unique element to American thought. He will finally voice more or less plainly the mysteries which lie in his sorrowful past and the dark story of his captivity. He will supply a mythic element to our literature.

His first phase, however, will be imitative of the white man. He will strive to dress, think, and write like his more advanced brother, but by and by, here and there a singer will break forth into song whose elements will go back to the heart of Africa. His crude utterances even now show his rich imagination and his musical



expression. There is a weird and sorrowful note in his songs, unique as it is touching, while his spiritual exaltation is a marked feature.

The environment, which term may be taken to include the climate, the face of the land, the soil, the resources of the internal part, and also the forms of society made of necessity by the climate, has been sufficiently touched upon. While it will not be so absolute in its domain over the race, yet it must still bear large share in the production of special functions in the nation as well as the individual.

There will go on an increasing solidarity of population -- growth will be in drawing closer together, rather than in dispersion into the wilderness. This constant coming together will make, of necessity, great changes in the thinking of each citizen, and bring unimaginable increase in invention and discovery. Cities will spring up to radiate heat and light, art will everywhere spring into loftier life, blooming with the rest of plants born of higher social life.

American society may in general be said to have begun upon a singular primitive homogeneous basis, and to have run swiftly through all the multiple phases of integration and specialization of labor which mark the highest grades of civilization upon the earth. So that whatever interest our so-called literature may lack as subject for investigation, the broader phases of American thought and future thinking present the most fascinating subjects for study

and speculation.

We have traced the organism as it expanded, watching how it has risen from a cold-blooded creature with little vascular system and inadequate nerves, up to a warm-blooded creature with highly developed and swift-bounding blood currents, and instantaneous nerve communication. We have noted how from a few thousand settlers all performing the same function, there has gone on a constant increase in trade, professions, artifices, journalism, traffic, governmental complications, all the innumerable specializations of a highly developed industrial type of society. This constant differentiation, while not by any means calculated or aided, has nevertheless gone on with mathematical precision and with constantly accelerating speed.

We are now in the midst of a two-fold specialization of functions. Not only that which creates new classes of workmen and professional persons, but the higher specialization of function in the different parts of the nation and the world.

It will be asked at this point, perhaps, what this has to do with literature. In answer I will quote from Professor Posnett, "The fundamental facts of literary evolution are the extent of the social group and the characters of the individual units." History is the record of the growth of individualism and altruism, man's dependency and freedom.

The man, whether called poet, painter, or king, is of his age, hopelessly imbedded in it. His imagination cannot escape the re-

strictions of time and space and surroundings. The past and the future must ever be treated in terms of the present and near. Therefore the study of social groups as well as individual merits, is necessary. The flower, literature, and art, can alone be fully comprehended by a study of the soil, the climate and the root. It is impossible for me to conceive of a man as following out the leadings of caprice; or that a genius is thrust into the world by a sort of special providence. Therefore I have studied as well as I am able the relations and causes of our age or individual. Such a study must be incomplete at best, and this essay has merely indicated some general phases of the continuous social development in America, as it appears to the writer.

## APPENDIX C

[The acting of Edwin Booth was one of Garland's enduring enthusiasms. During the Boston years Garland made a close study of the great tragedian's Shakespearean roles; he corresponded with Booth; and he gave lectures on his idol as Hamlet, as Lear, as Iago, as Shylock. The lecture on "Edwin Booth as Hamlet" gives us a remarkable conception of the actor's nuances and effects, which in an age without sound-recording devices could not be preserved except through such verbal descriptions. Garland's words, penetrating beneath tones of voice and peculiarities of gesture, bring Booth's portrayal of the dour Prince vividly before us. This lecture has not been published.]

HAMLIN GARLAND'S LECTURE, "EDWIN BOOTH AS HAMLET"

(1885)

The records of the great actors of the past are all very vague and unsatisfactory, confined to a few general observations upon the effects of the artist with very little note of the causes, and the reason for this lies in the fact that little was known of the bases of human expression.

The fact that certain tones, certain gestures, have developed naturally -- and are now instinctive, united with the fact that they are evanescent and subtle to a baffling degree, has kept expression an obscure vague subject. The question, "Why do we shake our heads from side to side in saying no, and nod vertically when we mean yes?" remained unanswered till Darwin turned the attention of scientists upon the matter in 1874 by publishing his remarkable volume "Expression in Man and Animal." This book laid the foundation of a new science upon which dramatic criticism would do well to found

itself. Similarly Helmholtz, in his treatise upon tone, sought and found fundamentals of vocal expression.

Darwin was followed by Mantegazza, the Florentine investigator. These men represent the scientific method of observation and reasoning. They answer the question, "Why do such and such gestures or attitudes mean thus and so to us?" I shall go as far as possible on the road to fixing definitely the cause of Edwin Booth's supremacy and perhaps I may be able to point out some of the reasons why his art was so valuable to all students of dramatic literature. If I succeed it will be due very largely to Darwin and Mantegazza. To do this I may be obliged to resort to technical terms to some extent but not enough to impair the interest, I trust.

The actors of to-day are very largely ruled by the actors of yesterday. Their fund of information is a curious jumble of metaphysical aesthetics, childish maxims, shrewd observations and personal likes and dislikes, a sort of silt that has accumulated from passage down the long line of mimes from Shakespeare to Madame Duse. It is instructive also to note that there is no small amount of mysticism and astrology mingled with these shrewd observations. And it is well, so far as it throws a halo round the paste-board crown. And beside, these methods are often good, however empirically put, for they contain the results of many crude experiments, though many are based upon imitation of some great actor's methods.

Now the imitator is generally an inferior artist and much more apt to catch and perpetuate the mannerisms of his master than his

unobtrusive excellencies. For the highest excellencies of any artist are extremely difficult to attain either by the master or the pupil. The master has grown intricate beyond the most delicate conscious apprehension. He can neither impart nor describe his art. For example, the tunes of the speaking voice are inexpressibly delicate. The notes are so exquisitely differentiated that at least nine of them are to be found between two notes on the singing scale. It is more difficult to describe Edwin Booth's reading of Shakespeare than it is to convey an idea of Paderewski's playing. This is the reason why all actors are described by the effects they produce rather than by their methods.

In short the art of every great actor has died with him and only incomplete imitations of him survive together with the story of his triumphs. Edwin Booth did more to familiarize the American public with the splendid poetry of Shakespeare than all our schools and yet he is only a beautiful tradition to-day. He illuminated Shakespeare for millions of Americans. He made Hamlet a living, suffering, reality to us -- through him many of us came to know Lear, Othello and Macbeth, and yet, try as I may, I am quite certain to fail of giving my reader any real notion of his grace and power. It is of no value to say "at this point the pit rose at him," or "in this passage he electrified his audience." The question you would ask is, "How did he do it?" "What were his means?" If these questions could be answered you too could share in my pleasure - my illumination.

But the very means which made his characterizations so rich, so satisfying, are so elusive, so subtle, so swift, that only the phonograph and the mutoscope could record them, and these also were not yet perfected when he died. As an art, acting is still in the position music occupied before the discovery of the scale -- of poetry before the development of writing. The greatest actor dies -- and soon is like Homer a tradition. His fame is indeed writ on water. In the hope of perpetuating to some degree Edwin Booth's fame I am printing these studies.

To many minds Booth remains the only Hamlet, so peculiarly was he fitted to enact this great role. To me he seems as shadowy, as elusive as Hawthorne and almost as sad as Poe. With all the honors heaped upon him in later life with an enormous income, he remained as modest -- as shy, as a refined girl.

He lived apart from his age -- devoted to his few friends and to his home.

Part of this was due to his private griefs. His first wife died while yet their daughter was an infant. His gifted brother made insane by political hatred, murdered Abraham Lincoln and died violently and these tragedies coming upon a naturally sensitive nature -- shadowed him from boyhood and those who knew him best called him "The Hamlet of the present."

His face in repose was always sad -- in action it could be lion-fierce. He was not large but when in Lear he drew his robes

around his shoulders and with uplifted hand commanded silence he was majestic.

His hands were hardly less expressive than his face -- and his voice as his friend Aldrich the poet said, was "liquid velvet." In Germany they exclaimed in praise of his vocal organ and his English. His enunciation was indeed flawlessly beautiful. He made old words seem new. He taught us the noble flex of English speech.

His lips were long and flexible and modulated the speech of Shakespeare's tragic characters into exquisite shades of tone -- colloquial beyond any tragedian of his time, and yet he never forgot the rhythm of his text. "None knew so well as he," says one of his admirers, "the golden mean between heroic speech and melting music."

He was a man of middle age when I saw him play Hamlet for the first time -- and yet I think he must have been at his best -- for he was intellectually at his Zenith and in good health, and though his hair was touched with gray, he was a beautiful Hamlet in appearance, and a marvellously satisfying one in tone. He taught me the poetry as well as the passion of Hamlet. He emblazoned the level lines. He gave me to see the human side of this drama without for a moment forgetting that it was in essence a great poem and for all this I return my grateful acknowledgements.

As a play Hamlet was never so great as it is to-day. Each generation enriches it by adding tender and ever-widening associations. The Hamlet which appeals to us is not the Hamlet of Shakespeare's time. Far from it. Time has softened, blended and har-



monized its music, color and ideas. The scale of appreciation is continually rising. The most easily apprehended parts are of course its lust and battle -- its rages. A little later its comedy situations, then some idea of right and wrong enters and is considered in the light of some current law or religion. Then some glimpse of its tragic meaning: later still, a larger estimate of its comment on life, but as yet inexpressible by most, while the idea of the drama as a complete whole, arrives last of all.

"Hamlet," as Goethe says, "is without a plan but the play is full of plan," and if in representing it, the keynote be struck at the opening, all is harmonic. This mighty drama, so fresh after three hundred years, bids fair to outlast the English race. It is great because it appeals to the thinking man in so many ways. It may come to the eye as a painting, as a harmony of effects through color, or as a symphony of tones. The story of Hamlet like that of Lear came out of the mists of the north-land -- floated a thousand years on the stream of tradition, gathering beauty and power until at last moulded into form by the hand of the great dramatist. Hamlet stepped from the shadow to be the world's type of doubt, the epitome of human life, rising in dawn-light, setting in shadow. He became the synonym of all the gloom and sorrow and wailing of a thousand years. All in the drama are accessories surrounding him. He is the passive suffering centre, just as Iago is the active centre of the play Othello. He is the good man enduring just as Iago is the Evil man, dominating. Each of the characters is disposed to bring out

this plan. The King with his medieval baseness and treachery, offsetting Hamlet's loyalty. The Queen false and fickle -- making the more striding the son's steadfast and consuming love. Osric with his butterfly existence, contrasting with Hamlet's morbid speculations upon life. Ophelia with her childish innocence set over against the terrible crimes of the court. The careless courtiers with laugh and sly jest bring out Hamlet's tragic sense of duty.

If you conceive of it as a choral symphony Hamlet's voice is the sombre theme which runs throughout the entire composition. Sounding under the high swell of music, heard in the lull of the mid-night wassail shouts, now rapid, deep, impetuous, now slow and solemn as a mid-night wind, that musical, burdened, sorrowful tone throbs on. It starts on a low foreboding key, it attains to grim humor, but never to mirth. The trumpets may sound a note of joy, but there is no gayety in Hamlet's voice. Horatio is sad from sympathy with his friend, and is silent.

The senile jests of Polonius raise but a faint and hollow laugh, while the central figure of all, the Prince with white, brooding, intent face, hears death's monotone beneath the swirl of pipe and tap of drum.

Looking upon it as a painting the same harmony might be shown in color. The sable robes and graceful figure of Hamlet filling the central place while all around him flare the bright colors of the gay lords and the deep purple of the royal pair. Laertes with his fair hair and gay dress. Ophelia's tender eyes and fluttering color,

make Hamlet's brooding melancholly [sic] the more marked. The royal state of king and queen develops still more potently his simplicity of tastes and poverty of resources. His intent is to put to shame the hollow pretensions of the court by his own demeanor. Polonius, an old child with a white winter of beard accentuates by empty words his own troubled musings and hopeless youth.

These qualities were all in place when the curtain rises on the court-scene, discovering Edwin Booth pale, restrained, suffering in the midst of the gayly-colored throng surrounding the throne. The unity of his conception is at once apparent. This is no playful Hamlet, capricious, boyish, and erratic, it is a sombre, philosopher, a student of life and a man burdened with doubt. It was the traditional Hamlet. Refined, touched with grace and poetry. The key to this impersonation may be found in the words of the queen at the opening of Scene II:

"Good Hamlet, cast thy Nighted color off  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark  
Do not forever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust."

As she speaks you feel at once that this mourning prince, this Hamlet with his trailing robes and lax-lidded eyes, this grieving poet whose constancy is a perpetual reproach to his false and sensuous mother is the Hamlet of Shakespeare's text. Even in his middle manhood Booth was a princely figure -- satisfying at every point. He carried his robes as a King should. In this scene a rigid re-

strait sits upon his face and hardens his voice. His brows are level, his lips motionless, his eyes introspective. His voice, deep and curt, is solemn in its falling cadences. He shows among the bustling courtiers like a statue of grief. Booth made plain to us that the drama of Hamlet was within the brain of Hamlet. He brought into that attitude, that sorrowful repose the speculative dignity of the scholar of Wittenberg.

His Hamlet was a man of rare attainments, a studious and refined gentleman who had obtained his views of the world from the seclusion of the cloister and from the pages of sage books, one who had been quietly happy in his world of fancy and pure thought, fortunate in the love of a noble father, a pure mother, and a lovely girl.

Suddenly the blow falls. His father is slain and Hamlet sees death, as all the world must do. The profoundest mystery of all enslaves him. He returns to the court only to find it filled with mock sorrow. The courtiers quickly resume their careless speech and their bright dress, and the prince, Hamlet, finds himself alone in his grief. Alone in the midst of a gayety which makes up in boisterousness what it lacks in sincerity.

Then like a lightning stroke in his night of grief comes the hasty and unseemly marriage of his mother to his uncle. The fair mother whom he had worshipped as something sacred fell so low that in his suffering he cries out:

"Oh! Heaven, a beast that wants

Discourse of reason

Would have mourned longer."

So here now we see him, clothed in black, confronting the queen with white and rigid face, and in the cold and stately courtesy of his answer we may read the loss of all respect for her.

"I shall in all my best obey you, madam."

We see him next upon the walls of the city where he goes to take the air and to prove the folly of his friends.

He enters conversing upon the weather and the King's banquet in a calm and collected tone which has a singular effect in the depth of the night, so passionless, so undisturbed is he the others begin to quake and tremble. Hamlet has been told of the walking of his father's spirit but has no slightest belief in the ghost. His voice and manner are those of the scholar, the man of high intelligence rebuking the superstitious.

Suddenly it comes! and in awe and amazement he listens while the long story of the crime comes on.

His awe deepens into horror, the reverential love with which he greets the spirit of his father passes into rage and despair. He sinks to the floor oppressed by the sense of his responsibility and the vision solemnly vanishes. He knows the worst of both his uncle and his mother.

Here is the point where many commentators consider the madness of the prince to begin. Booth seems to have adopted the idea set forth by Taine. He represented Hamlet sinking under the overpowering tumult in his brain. He fell prostrate writhing in an extremity of horror and despair. Then a darker thought nerves him, vengeance

is for a moment in his mind, and rising unsteadily to his feet he reverts again to his father's message.

"Remember thee," he cried, with an infinite tenderness in his beautiful voice.

"Ay, thou poor ghost! while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain, . . ."

Now while love for his mother wars with horror of her faithlessness and his mind is surging with loathing and hate of his uncle, a fear of his own weakness, an uncertainty how to act falls upon him and while all these wild passions are awirl in his brain, his companions return. They are his dearest friends, but in such fearful extremity can he trust them? Can he trust anyone?

In this confused state what more natural than the words and actions to which he resorts. He gives the bird-call mechanically, unconsciously waving his handkerchief, then hastily wiping the tears from his eyes faces the most immediate problem, whether to confide in his friends or not.

Again and again he comes near the point standing with hands on the shoulders of Horatio, peering eagerly as if to read his soul in his face, then turns away with some senseless jest.

No, this is not madness. It is doubt, dismay, grief, unwillingness to unveil the horror of the tale. It is confusion but not chaos.

Hamlet, says Taine, is a case of moral poisoning. Upon a scholar with pure and noble thoughts is now laid the frightful task of avenging a fiendish crime. He is not exactly the tender vase which Goethe considered him. He is a thinker, a profound and sombre man. He is no longer a boy. He is self-contained, capable of secretiveness, master of himself and able to dominate those around him -- at least when the fencing is intellectual or for sport, but when the notion of crime comes upon him his hand trembles. He is a scholar surrounded by sensualists. A dreamer among savages, a fore-runner of the age of reason. Furthermore he is at the mercy of a despot. He is aware that his own life is in peril. A whisper and he would be banished or killed and his father's death remain unavenged.

Therefore these companions, true as they are, must be well tried before staking all upon their fealty. He calls upon them to swear. They swear, but the tale is not told before us. Shakespeare has drawn a veil over that, as painters cover the face of the dead Caesar falling in the death agony. When that shuddering revelation is made we do not know. What a task it was to take from the holiest niche in his heart the image of his queenly mother and dash it in the mire! -- Her crime was such as can be told only at night in the darkness of a vault.

From this time forth Hamlet is the victim of a monomania. He

is insane as Taine says, only so far as a fixed idea is insanity. He does not lose his faculties, he simply withdraws their entire force from the thousand things of ordinary life and converges them upon one dark and desperate plan. One or two gloomy and savage conceptions not only lead him captive but color all the world about him. He becomes as someone has said a creature of moods, but they are few and for the most part paralyzing in their effects.

Henceforth no smile of joy will light his face. He will laugh only in the convulsions of hysterical excitement. His voice will be low, deep and musical, with but few inflections. Its monotonous denoting that the same monstrous thought comes again and again till it shadows his consciousness as a cloud shadows a plain. He will brood more than plan, and plan more than execute.

By feigning madness, by the use of a wandering troupe of players, by Horatio's aid, he will elaborately design a scheme for unmasking the King and then fail of the final act of blood. He is not always irresolute as has been urged again and again, but he is hedged in by circumstances. Surrounded by spies he is forced to be wary. He who was frankness itself becomes astute and evasive.

He feels so deeply that he fears every passer by. He permits no one to discern his purpose in his face, hence the rigid immobility of his brow.

He evades Polonius and the rest by becoming deeply philosophical or by quoting cynical proverbs. He is, however, singularly self-contained. His powerful mind has grasped the most immediate danger of his situation and because his thought is so far reaching he does



not, like an impulsive boy, rush to his own ruin. He therefore prepares his friends for the seeming "antic disposition" which he must put on as a shield. In all this you will see Mr. Booth made Hamlet a man of thought, of years.

The next great development of his character comes in the recitation of the player. It is at once evident to us that he has fallen into despair. His resolution has weakened by much thought. No further message has come from the tomb of his father, and doubt again oppresses him. Something is needed to stimulate him to action. This is done by the player, with his Hecuba and fictitious passion. "What a rogue and peasant slave am I!" he cries accusingly.

In this soliloquy Booth delineated Hamlet as a man fully roused, a resolute, rapid and crafty man. His voice was firm and decisive. His gestures were natural, vigorous, determined. His eye was bright, his face stern and commanding, and for the moment he seemed a healthy well-poised man of action. "I know my course," he ends.

This mood, however, soon passes away as he takes into account the dangers, the difficulties of his plan. He falls again into inertness. There are two active courses open to him. He can go alone and deliberately plunge his sword into the breast of the King and so bring sure death upon himself, or he can proclaim the King's guilt and call him to justice. One plan seems quite as hopeless as the other. He can prove nothing against his sovereign. He is alone a poor scholar pitted against a determined despot. He can not force himself to publish his mother's infamy to the world, and as somebody has said he cannot "subpoena the ghost for witness." Besides he

loves Ophelia. Ophelia and Horatio are all that remain to him and he clings to life with that instinctive passion which holds the world together.

It is in this ever-narrowing snare of troublous life that he enters upon the stage in the world-famous soliloquy "to be or not to be." And the deep tones broken by sighs of intellectual pain show the struggle in which he is still involved. He is on the verge of suicide as an end of his perplexity. He has solved nothing, accomplished nothing. "To be or not to be; that is the question."

With marble-like stillness of feature, with unseeing eyes, he questions himself upon the desolate life of man. Debating the most sinister and momentous questions ever laid upon the human soul to answer. Does life pay? Is there a God? Does Justice rule? The picture made by the great player at this point is unforgettable.

Victor Hugo, the great poet of the conscience, used words applying to Jean Valjean, which here seem relevant. "The mental eye can no-where attain greater brilliancy or greater darkness than within man. It cannot dwell upon anything more complicated, more formidable, mysterious or infinite."

"There is a spectacle grander than the ocean and that is the human conscience. There is a spectacle grander than the sky and that is the interior of the soul. To write the poem of the human conscience, were the subject one man and he the lowest of men, would be reducing all epic poems to one supreme and final epos. Conscience is the chaos of chimeras, envies and attempts. The furnace of dreams, the lurking place of ideas of which we are ashamed. It is the

pandemonium of sophistry, the battlefield of the passions."

"At certain times look through the livid face of a reflecting man, look into his soul, peer into the darkness. Beneath the external silence combats of giants are going on, combats such as Homer writes of. Meles of dragons and hydras such as Milton saw."

Of such is the struggle in the mind of Hamlet. There he sits fair and graceful in the middle prime of life, weighing whether the shadow of the unknown can in any way exceed the shadow of the known. "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Or by opposing end them." The music of Edwin Booth's voice in this passage lingers in the ear like the most exquisite music.

Upon him in this mood comes Ophelia. She too is caught in the coil of swirling waters. She has been his only joy, but now her presence confuses, infuriates him. He had given her promises, but they can not, must not be kept. For the sinister resolution which he had made is sure to bring death and ruin upon himself. Therefore he must renounce all hope of happiness. Ophelia must be saved. He dares not be tender. He dares not dwell upon her purity and maidenly charm. He can not tell her his reasons for his harsh manner. He assumes that he is doing her a kindness by accusing himself. He rushes farther. To disgust her he slanders her and all womankind. He is half-crazed with his own self-torture but he is inexorable.

"Get thee to a nunnery," he commands and beseeches.

Wildly tender at times, at others as wildly harsh he was ever the gentleman, the man of refinement, the poet, and as he went out

repeating the words "Go! Go!" his face quivering in tearless agony, his hands extended as if to defend himself from her beauty and her love, Hamlet showed himself to be as deeply moved as the stricken girl herself.

Close on this passage of deepest piercing passion comes the meeting with the strolling band of players, and here again unobtrusively yet most clearly the art of the great actor appeared. He carried forward the emotion of the scene with Ophelia. He was throughout the man stricken. His despair was in the slow, stately movement of his limbs, in the shadow of his face, in the sombre abstraction of the eyes.

Hamlet has himself been something of a devotee of the actor's art, and in his instructions to the player he permits himself for a moment a return to the carefree world of art. He seems lifted for the instant above his most poignant griefs. He greets the players cordially, yet as a prince. Intent upon his advice and its relevancy and moved by the memories of other and happier days, his trouble loses some part of its cruel content. His manner is most charming and yet under it all runs the dark current of his care.

As the player goes out and Horatio comes in, we note a singular thing. Hamlet turns and pronounces a fervid eulogium on his friend Horatio. Why does he do this? The time does not seem to call for it. But let it be noted that Hamlet professes love to no one else. He is alone. He hates the King, despises Polonius, has no word or interest in the false and flattering court. He can not speak words of affection to his fallen mother, and he dare not show his love for

Ophelia. Therefore he turns to Horatio the one object of his outspoken love -- Horatio his other self. It is pitiously pathetic to see him feel out for Horatio's sympathy.

Of Horatio little is said and yet he must have been one of those rare sweet characters, whose friendship is so strong that he forgets his own troubles in sharing the burdens of others. He is the only one to whom Hamlet can turn to whom he can unreservedly pour out his agony, his defiance of disastrous fate.

It is beautiful to see how he relies upon Horatio, keeping him near him in his trials, turning his eyes upon him often. He loved to clasp his hand to exchange glances with him and now in the great crisis of his life, in his testing the King's conscience it is to Horatio that he turns for help. Now we understand why he takes him by both hands and bending upon him a look of love and trust begins.

"Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal."

"O, my dear lord, --" protests Horatio.

"Nay, do not think I flatter;  
For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee?  
. . . For thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
. . . Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee, Horatio."

Nothing that Edwin Booth did was more greatly beautiful than this scene.

We hasten now to that most notable scene where Hamlet, lying at the feet of Ophelia, fixes blazing eyes upon the startled King. While the players enact the scene of the poisoning, Hamlet's eyes look battles, he has the hoarse, strained voice and convulsive breath of one strangled, his tone gradually rises and increases in power till as the guilty ruler springs up his accusation ends in a wild and choking laugh, a convulsive, terrible expression of mad excitement. Then as he flings himself upon Horatio, crying out in exultation, the reaction comes, he gasps, and a look of terror passes over his face. He calls huskily for music. The strain is almost too great to be borne.

While still he is striding about the room in uncontrollable excitement, the two courtiers, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, suddenly appear. They are spies and Hamlet knows it. Quick as the dropping of a mask, his face, writhing with passion, smooths out and resumes a rigid calm. His whole body regains its stately dignity and reserve. At the mention of his mother he bows as he always does at her name, and answers with a cold and formal courtesy that tells how low she has fallen --

"We shall obey were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?" he asks with veiled hate.

The scene which follows with the Queen was most piercing. The hearer was swept along as by a flood, a mountain torrent. Booth

did indeed speak daggers.

Hamlet standing over his mother resembled an angel of light, in sorrowful judgment. The shrieks of the tortured writhing woman, the swift, agitated but determined tones of the son, the pale beauty of his face, the rapid alternation of words of filial love and cadences of judicial sternness, carried this act to a sublime height. This was no playful, moody, boyish Hamlet; it was a terribly earnest and accusing man speaking in anger and despair.

And then when the spirit of the father passed by once more and Hamlet fell upon his knees, the moonlight streaming through the castle window on his hushed and reverent face, made a picture never to be forgotten. His lips prayed dumbly, silently, as though Hamlet were swallowed up in awe and reverence. "Dost then come thy tardy son to child," he brokenly asks.

At his father's command we soften toward his mother and yet the significant action, solemn, firm with which he seizes her hand as she essays a blessing upon him, shows that she has no longer the right to bless even her son.

The inexpressible tenderness of his last good-night tells us how his love strives with his sense of justice. "I must be cruel only to be kind," he says in voice of exquisite tenderness. And yet he weakly permits the King to send him toward England. He dare not kill him. His conscience is too sensitive. While absent upon this trip he meets an influence which is not represented in the drama as presented by any modern actor and that is the sight of twenty thousand men "going to their graves like beds for a fantasy,

a trick of fame." Fight for a plot of ground not big enough to try the issue on, nay! not enough to bury the slain, while he has not the courage to kill one man, and so, damned eternally, leap into the dark hereafter.

This experience spurs him again to sternest resolution and he returns to court determined to execute upon his perfidious uncle. Thus furnished he sets foot again in Denmark and we meet him and Horatio as they enter the gateway of a churchyard where a rude laborer is hoarsely singing a ditty while digging a grave.

Hamlet muses profoundly on this while seated near, his sable cloak around him, his pale face gleaming from the folds of his cowl. Here Edwin Booth was at his best. Sad, speculative, tragically trying to look beyond the grave, he voiced the longings and fears of humanity. The rude jests of the grave diggers bring only a faint, sweet smile to Hamlet's lips. His face remains motionless as marble, his voice musical, deep, full of thrilling, haunting cadences of matchless beauty. The inflection with which he asked the grave digger how long a body might lay in the ground, made his hearers shudder and the words and tones in the sentences addressed to Yorick, who that has heard them can ever lose their magic.

As I listened to him the roar of the city's traffic died into silence; its brick-walls were as mist. Warring kingdoms seemed but the shadows cast by a passing cloud, and the whole mighty stream of hurrying humanity became like the passing of a shadowy whispering river rushing endlessly into night.

I lost sight of Booth the player; the eternal thought which



Hamlet voiced seemed the only reality before me. The thoughtless sallies of the grave-maker only accentuated the tragic blackness of the sky.

Here again we touch the universal. Hamlet is commenting on the tragedy of humanity. His will stirs the soul to its profoundest depths. For more than two hundred and fifty years this scene has enriched all who have gazed upon it. All men have read their own thoughts into it and the last word is not yet spoken upon it. Just as in human life each Century gathers to itself more mystery and more significance, so an evergrowing fund of association gathers around this supreme drama and Edwin Booth, schooled in sorrow, himself the Hamlet of his day, gave us the essential and epic poetry.

In on this gloomy churchyard comes the wailing music of a dirge and the slow steps of a funeral train following to the grave the slender form of the drowned Ophelia. Hamlet watches it come in with impersonal interest till he sees Laertes.

Laertes speaks, and then Hamlet learns, for the first time, of his ineffable loss. His sorrow becomes personal. He ceases to be the philosopher and becomes the lover. See in his livid, rigid face and trembling limbs whether his love for Ophelia was a slight thing. All his philosophy avails nothing. His grief grows wild. Horatio leads him gently away. That scene of suffering was too sacred for delineation and the dramatist has vented it.

But as the service goes on and he hears the frantic grief of Laertes, he advances to assert his rights, throwing the cape from his head. "It is I, Hamlet the Dane," he cries in voice mingled with

anguish and defiance. With a yell of rage Laertes leaps toward him, but is prevented by others. With calm dignity Hamlet commands his release and in disdainful voice continues,

"Why I will fight with him upon that theme  
Until my eyelids will no longer wag."

"What theme?" questions the Queen.

His answer is of infinite tenderness which flies to exaggeration to express itself. The voice just now so cold and disdainful grows musical with an overpowering love. The eyes are suffused with tears, the face tender and winning. "I love the fair Ophelia," was his answer.

In his bout with Laertes Mr. Booth represents Hamlet as not entering into its spirit. His voice is cold, his lips curled in scorn. His grief does not naturally take that expression and by assuming it he aims to put Laertes to shame as he afterward says, "The bravery of his grief did put me into a towering passion."

One emotion drives out another, this disdainful rage causes him to forget in some measure his great loss. A moment later and he ends, "Nay an thou'lt mouth I'll rant as well as thou." Then turning he flings his arm on Horatio's neck and gives utter to his sorrow. He breaks with grief.

When he lifts his head again all rage has died out, all scorn has melted into tender contrition, as turning again to Laertes he said with infinite sweetness. "Sir, what is the reason that you use me thus? I loved you ever: but it is no matter."

And with this conclusion on his lips and leaning heavily on the shoulder of his friend he goes slowly away.

The nearest he comes to smiling in all the play is when Osric comes upon his sad communion with Horatio, wherein we learn of many things. Hamlet is once again all adrift in his plans. The courtiers sent with him to England have been killed by his direction, and the issue of it and all will be known to the King. All seems now to be lost. But one course remains. To go directly and kill the King boldly, openly and take the consequences.

But upon this talk Osric, the butterfly courtier trips, gay, be-winged and bespangled waving his hand and fluttering his dainty cap, full of fencing terms, wagers, praises of courtiers -- in short the incarnation of unthinking and pleasure-loving youth, with all its graces, vivacities, affectations, concerns of the moment, careless of the future.

He is the very opposite of the tragic benumbed stately figure in black who faces him with a faint, amused, pathetic gleam in the eyes. By his youth, affected grace and devotion to the present, to the sport of the court, Osric seems to draw upon Hamlet's mind for its sunniest memories. Of the times when with Yorick and the lads of the court he had sported in the gay air with no suspicion of its crimes, its insincerity and its dread secrets. And now as Osric dances before him brimming with life, for the moment a faint smile of amusement, lights the worn and musing face of the Prince, and the quizzical gleam in his eyes sorts well with the almost playful words which he addresses to the restless youth.

Hamlet has long been like a tense bowstring, drawn ever almost to breaking, and now as a chance for diversion presents itself, he is compelled to accept. He cannot help it. Like one who laughs hysterically at some trifling incident in a highly wrought scene, his tension drives him into accepting the challenge of Laertes.

Beside this relief, he felt that action might give him courage and opportunity. Therefore he goes with the shadow of his impending fate flinging a sinister shadow on his face, with a look of piercing heart-pain -- he utters the lines which follow and which were those best loved by Booth.

"But thou would'st not think how ill all's here about my heart, but 'tis no matter."

"Nay, good my Lord -- "

"It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman."

"If your mind dislike anything, obey it. --"

"Not a whit, we defy augury. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, then it is now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

It is peculiarly significant of Edwin Booth's character that these level lines were a joy to him.

Last Scene of all is the fencing scene. Here Hamlet is the very perfection of grace. An expert swordsman, lithe and active, scholar

though he be, Hamlet wins from the treacherous Laertes, the hits. The Queen drinks the poisoned cup. The venomed sword after doing its fatal work upon its victim is exchanged and undoes the perpetrator of the treachery. The Queen screams and falls. Hamlet lifts his voice in stern command, looking rapidly from one to the other as if in question. Laertes gasps out his crime. With a wild cry Hamlet drops on his knees beside him, a look of ineffable horror and loathing on his face, then with his eyes flaming forth a desperate resolve he leaps upon the King and stabs him to the heart.

What horror is on his ghastly face and in his trembling limbs as he looks upon the works of his hands. As he stands tottering there, looking down upon the fallen King, it seems as though the endless unavailing remorse of the future rushed like a flood of fire through his brain. His mother next appeals and again he forgets all in rage against the King. Confused, harrassed, in utter dismay he turns to Horatio, who is about to drink of the poison, and wrenches the cup from him, adjuring him to plead his cause aright and clear his name before the world.

And so while the cadenced feet of an army and the far cannon are heard without, the weary spirit grows faint and dim, and as he sinks in Horatio's arms the deeply grown lines of passion and sorrow smooth out, and like a marble dreamless sleep, death settles on his tortured soul.

"The rest is silence."

## APPENDIX D

[Hamlin Garland's journal of his first trip to the West after taking up his residence in Boston reveals his manner of writing and the range of his interests at the time. Unpublished -- except that Chapter XXVIII, "A Visit to the West," in A Son of the Middle Border is based on it, in part -- a copy of the little notebook is perhaps worth including as an appendix of this dissertation.]

"Transcript from my notebook of 1887 --  
describing my visit to the Middle West  
in that year.

Hamlin Garland"

### Chapter 1.

#### LEAVING BOSTON, 1887.

I left Boston in the late June on the Hoosac tunnel line. I had been away from the west for four years, and had lived continually in the city of Boston or Suburb.

The first distinct feeling of pleasure which I had on the ride was the sight of the deep shadowy forest with great trees, with under-growth of brakes, deep green and fresh. It brought up for me experiences of childhood. Also I noticed with delight the leaves on the pawn, burnished as living gold. They illustrated for me the words of Shelly's "Starry River Buds."

The Berkshire hills interested me. The meadows starred with white, red and yellow. The horizon a vast amphitheater of blue walls broken with wavy lines like vast parapets. Thought of Hawthorne

writing among these picturesque valleys.

Saw a man on a rye field with his rake and reaper. A man binding. They wore straw hats with handkerchiefs hung down behind to keep the sun off the neck. One man shook his finger at us jovially.

The river is to the landscape like a fine mirror in a parlor.

Burning prairie grass effect upon my brain, calling up succession of ideas and memories of old times. Sense of smell one of strong relationship.

Cliffs along the Mohawk valley brought up ledges of lime stone on the old Cedar River.

Slept that night in my seat. Could not afford a sleeper. Did not take any notes. No fun, too sleepy, to [sic] uncomfortable. Lights in cars too dim. Noticed particularly a young girl traveling alone. A very interesting study. Big honest, innocent eyes, self-reliant face, like some of my old schoolmates, and made the best of every discomfort. Her face never showed irritation. Country along the lake shore I found very attractive, level and rich in verdure.

I was stiff and sore with the cramped position in which I had been dozing, but had began [sic] to pluck up a little courage. One gets out side of the comforts of travel, so far as ordinary cars are concerned, after leaving Albany.

As we got to Oberlin the rye and winter wheat began to show up, while shocks stood thickly over the field. All was thrift and plenty, apparently.

I was delighted to observe more chin whiskers among the men and more weight as we neared the west. More color in the cheeks, more variety as to dress. Coats did not fit so well on the whole, but there was a certain strength and heartiness which compensated.

A little comedy. A man who took a girl's seat while she was getting a drink of water. She would not sit down beside him. Her face a study of timidity, and chagrin. Fellow got red in the ears, but he held the fort, and the girl was forced to give in and sit down as far away as possible.

How forlorn the laborers looked to me in the fields under the hot sun, looking forward to the 4th of July, a thing to cheer them on to plot for other days under the burning sun. What a life, what a tragedy. It is that men are condemned to such toil with no better hope than to go to a celebration of the glorious 4th. From my standpoint at present it is all unprofitable.

I began to hear Scandinavian words and talk at Toledo and westward. Idlers sitting beside the track under the trees with their shoes off enjoying the breeze. They had nothing to do.

The girls began to look different. Had a different walk, less graceful? Shoes apparently troubled them. Faces were fresher more childish.

A man got on with a whiskey bottle in his coat pocket. His immense enjoyment of it. Very comic. He hung to it like a dog to a root. Ultimately he became an offense.



## Chapter 2.

I had a delightful visit with Joseph Crukland [Kirkland], who I found to be a small, alert, sensitive man with precise speech and liberal ideas. He gave me a great deal excellent talk concerning art of fiction and advised me to write. I found him living in what was to me a most imposing house on Rush Street. His people seemed to regard me as something that had blown in from outside.

I pulled out the next day for the west. It was a beautiful day and the 3rd day of July. Corn fields, apple orchards, and sheaves of waving blades of wheat, rank and red, appealed to me with great power. The variety of the shades of green as the wind turned the leaves upward and depressed them struck me with new beauty. Each field had its special tones and movements oats, barley, and wheat. I was so profoundly impressed with this journey, that I wrote a poem called, "Into the West", the first draft of which was as follows:

I laugh as I ride  
On my green prairies wide,  
I exalt and am glad  
In the might of the steam.

Like an eagle on wing  
I swoop and swing.  
I shout and am mad  
With a wild sweet pain  
To meet the plain.

I could not but observe the lack of the esthetic of all the homes of the western farmers. Not a suggestion that there is something higher than mere utility. The house a bare box like, with hardly a curved line. A miserable square structure of the conventional carpenter's type. It was not a question of expense. The same money put into the right form of dwelling, would furnish the same room and might be beautiful. The trouble is they are not educated in these things, and their surroundings are made prosaic. I was struck as never before by the boundless wealth of natural benefits. Rich and fertile plains that seem inexhaustible and not half tilled.

Our train was a Sunday train, and after dinner whenever we came to a village platform a crowd of people in their best dresser gathered to catch a glimpse of the train, and to be seen by us. They seemed to desire to feel the gaze of the world upon them. The girls were out in their best ribbons. Many of them pretty and graceful. The boys were often stupid or abnormally loud voiced and rude of joke.

These people show the need of diversion in this dreary town. Amid such monotonous surroundings the train comes like a messenger from the great unknown world far beyond the horizon. In the coming of the engine and its gorgeous cars seems to help them forget the pettishness of their own lives. And fills them with ambition to live something better.

The men wore broader hats, the women lacked the then current bustles.

A man came into the train. He seemed to me to be a type, a bold man with a beard like a Russian. An aggressive face, and naturally without the slightest delicacy. He would chew gum over the shoulder of the angel Gabriel without a blush.

A young couple got on the train. He was a country dandy. Wore a high hat, faultless coat, daintily twisted mustache. She was young, good and true. A peculiar complexion which might be called a masked pink. Pearly teeth and a tender and trusting smile. He might have been a village drug clerk.

An irristible [sic] girl who said, by-gosh and don't give a damn. Talked loudly with widely opened and vigorously handled lips.

I began to see that I had read in the minds of these people too much that was sensible. They knew nothing and cared little for the things I valued so highly.

Art was an unknown term to them, and literature they had not explored. They were like their surroundings. As I looked at the couple before me, I was again reminded that the courtship of most young people is not a matter of refinement. It was made up of tapping, putting the arm around the girl's shoulder and pinching the cheek. It brought to my mind similar courtships I had witnessed on the farm and in the little village in which I went to school. To impute to these people a thought, a connected conversation would be nonsense. They could not imagine anything of the sort.

The river towns along the Mississippi are of quite a different nature to the prairie towns. They have a number of brick and stone cottages set in the side hill. Bellevue for example. They have a

little old look and their characters are out of date. They are not modern, but small towns almost unconnected by railroads. They straggle away from the river in queer old works, long and low, their sides to the streets. Painted in unharmonizing brown and white and brick. Some of them plastered high on the outside, the whole effect quite striking. They were built by the Canadian French trappers and boatmen in old days.

The river scenery was exceedingly fine, rich full of variety, fresh and green. Just at sunset the river became a glory, and the sun set in pale gold. The river was perfectly still reflecting like burnished mirror the lighted glory of the sky. A blue hill lay in the foreground on each side, always with the most velvety green, touched on one side by the light of the sun, and the whole river looked like a roadway into Paradise. Silent and alone in the mid-distance blazed with reflected glory like an immeasurable gem. Along sand beach interchanged with brown and gold, while a gray mist wreathed in the distant portals of the royal river. It was all ineffably splendid and every change brought about by the movement of the train gave a new and still more beautiful vista. Brought in more color and changed it.

### Chapter 3.

Charles City. Arriving here this morning, it was necessary for me to wait until 3:30 for the first train North to take me to my old home at Osage. Thus the day opened and a wet, dull, gray dawn appeared over the world. Notwithstanding the air was chilly and a gray mist of clouds swept along. In the village anvils were being

exploded and the fire-crackers rattled. Bells rung furiously at intervals. Around me in the prairie grass, larks were singing and roosters could be heard in all parts of the village, crowing with all shades of different voices and meaning. I met here an old friend, former County Superintendent of School, Mr. Rhan, and we fell into a talk concerning old friends and neighbors.

A cold rain set in proving a damper on the celebration. The splendid air of the previous day was gone. The sky looked like the sky of autumn, gray, sullen, discouraged. Around were many anxious hearts that day, and thousands of boys asked of their fathers as I once did, "Do you think it will rain all day?" I observed a groupe of poor little bare legged boys in front of a cottage firing cartridges, with that keen enjoyment that comes to those who have few enjoyments and little excitement. Poor little devils from my standpoint, but happy little animals probably from a true standpoint.

I was particularly interested in a young preacher who walked as though the fate of thousands had been upon his shoulders. His personal pride was exceedingly interesting to me for it gave him a fine poise of the body. He was handsome fellow, and was aware of it.

A great man among a large body of Americans is a minister. The age of superstition still exists. The medicine man who is supposed to stand nearest the elbow of God has dominion wider than the radicals some times think.

A crowd of young people got on at [illegible] bound for Osage. Among them an attractive girl, quite pretty, and oh, what pride in her white dress and poor little ornaments. She had a shawl but did

not wear it over her shoulders, because it would hide her ribbons. She warbled with an air of satisfaction; looking at her rather stupid beau with tender and bewitching gestures.

A rude fellow made a marked bow to her, and it was very beautiful to see the swift recoil of her whole body and the fall of her eyelids, followed by a look of deepest indignation. This depressed her for a little while, but she soon over come [sic] it and began trilling again out of over-flowing joy.

It was good to see how gentle she was. She might be foolish and vain, but she was not wanton, that was certain. The rude fellow was dashed. He was a man of middle age, bald headed, bold eyed with a villainous moustache, but he could not face the injured innocence of that girl. Her lover grinned with a very stupid distortion [sic] of the lips; he was so much less a man than she a woman.

At last I came within sight of the little town in which I had lived so many years. I began to observe familiar houses after crossing the bridge, over Lena River, and soon we drew up to a little dingy station from which I had started out into the world some six years before. The town seemed smaller, lonelier and more squalid. Leaving the train I slung my valise over my shoulder and walked up the street. There were crowds of people, coming and going on the side-walk, and for an hour or two I did nothing but walk about studying these people whom I had known for so many years. No one recognized me for I had grown a full beard since leaving.

The faces struck me as being cross almost brutish in many cases.

Still there were many good faces. One thing most noticeable was this, in the West the brutish people look worse than usual because they are badly dressed, while in city the faces called bad belonging to the young rowdy or the servant girl is accompanied by the dress of a lady or gentleman. Thus in a measure the disagreeable outlines of their faces and figures are disguised.

I discovered the boys and their girls driving about in the good old way in expensive carriages, and treating the ice-cream and peanuts.

The farmers had grown old and more grizzled, otherwise they looked the same. I knew them instantly. They were afflicted with the same old trouble. Chinch bugs were in the wheat, and they put a damper upon their feelings. I went to the best hotel in town for my breakfast. It was a terrible breakfast. I took my seat by an open window which looked out down the street and while being served by a slap-dash girl in a jersey waist, I looked out down the street seeing constantly familiar faces passing by.

Among the rest, Lawyer Rice went by with his usual stately step, looking much shattered it seemed to me. There were a thousand memories of this remarkable man in my mind. I remembered his long speeches, his occasional drunkenness, his great dignity, his love of poetry, his florid and long winded orations on literary topics. And many other peculiarities which were always connected by the people of the town, because they were a part of his personality. He always wore his coat, a well fitting Prince Albert frock, unbuttoned, and his vest always unbuttoned to the last two buttons thus exposing his

spotless white shirt in something of the fashion, and revival of the old time ruffled shirt front. He chewed tobacco frightfully, and drank at times with such vivacity that it seemed as though he would drink himself to death.

I saw two or three young girls go by who had been my classmates, and at last I made myself known to one or two of them and we took seats in a [sic] open window of a law office, to see the street parade go by.

I looked upon the scene with such alien eyes that it was all disgusting and pitiful. It was pitiful to see these people crowd to watch a miserable farce like this street parade. It was a revolution of the frightful monotony of the every day lives like those of Anna and Eva Kelly or Matilda Tower and Mrs. Coffin waiting for that vulgar fantastic procession to pass by. It was to me a sad thing.

The crowd was comfortably dress, [sic] but with no regard to style. The men wore, at least many of them, poor straw hats, the women, specially the girls, wore white gowns. The absence of the bustle and corset was noticeable. They had in many cases a fine free walk, some, however, swung along lithe, strong, and erect.

I sat in the law office of Mr. F. F. Coffin, in company with his wife, who had been one of my early teachers and friends, a fine strong, intelligent woman. She, among all the women I had met, had kept pace with me intellectually. I felt in speaking to her as though I were talking to one of my friends in Boston or Chicago.

I recognized nearly every face of the old men and women, but the young people had grown entirely out of my memory. Sometimes,



however, I was able to recognize them. Queer little squirts of boys have developed into tall young fellows with all the airs that boys of my generation assume.

In talking with the old settlers I noticed many mistakes of grammar, but comparatively little dialect, [sic] properly speaking. They said, "I hadn't nothing", and other such blunders. The East born people, I found left off the "g" in going and running. I was keenly alive for the first time to their peculiarities. Uncle Billy Frazer, for example used the New Jersey dialect [sic] couw and nouw, etc. He seemed to me alert, good looking and powerful. He was getting irritable an [sic] old. He was full of the old kinds of curious phrases like, chingling. He said, "The buggy wheel went chingling along the road." Used the expression "Bug out his eyes." He spoke of prying deep into things. Was undergoing a vast and deeply laid transformation. His hair was whitening.

Old conceptions no longer suited him. He had freed himself almost entirely from religious creeds. He had a mighty reverence for Ingersoll whom he called Ingelson. He was deeply interested in every remark I made which seemed to confirm him in his freedom of thought. I went home with him a few days later and made a still more careful study of him.

Other peculiarities which I noticed for the first time, were these. Letters were eliminated where they interrupted the flow of words, as for example, he put im -- h left out. But he did not flinch from his duty. The eliminations added to the swiftness and directness of the speech. Some of the people said, goen for going.

Cumere for come here. You mays well give it up. In many cases the sound of "a" was flat. In the speech of the more intelligent there was hardly a single dialect trace, except that the "r" was sounded and made more strongly than in Boston. I spent a day making observations of this kind and meeting old friends and neighbors. Several of my classmates were still living in the village and one or two of them seemed to me to be as I once thought them, others seemed to have remained behind without much development.

I took lodgings with my old friends the Morrisons, and made a careful study of their Scotch dialect modified as it is by a life in the West. They were living in precisely the same way as when I last saw them. Living most frugally on bread and milk which they ate at a little table in the kitchen. Mrs. Morrison, a strongly individualized Scotch with tremendous head of red gold hair appealed to me with even greater power than ever before. She was a great reader of all the old books and poets and was something of a poet herself. She seemed to enjoy talking with me although she by no means considered me in the light of a superior intellect.

Notes on the Scotch dialect by Morrison.

I observed the following rules. i became a short e as kelt instead of kilt.

Rep in place of rip.

But was boot. o equaled u. In our become oor. As for example well ai kenna say enything about thot.

A equals a in father, thot.

Bill they call bell.

About the hoose, they said.

Was heel makin five doll-ars. O is shortened where it should be long and lengthened where it should be short. Not became note.

Werne there. All combinations of ere had the sound of ware. Perfectly. Wather. ing was always sounded.

Commonly thathn were known aboot.

Ye was sure, instead of you.

Louvesboot attendair floor and what ease she knew. Nough but a pock horse. Forehair beg mon. Hair lives rueened new. Shes lost hair girrl head and got neithing in plass.

#### Chapter 4.

The next day I went out to visit an old neighbor near the old farm. I rode out with Uncle Billy Frazer, and stayed over night with him. I found Mrs. Frazer, to be as homely as tried and as long suffering as ever. She was so lame she could scarcely walk yet she was at work incessantly. From early dawn until late at night there was not a moment of rest for her. She put me into her little spare room in which was a cheap chamber set of ash. It was a plain room and she took great pride in it with its' lace curtains and its' new wash bowl and pitcher.

The supper table was covered with an oil cloth with pitchers of milk, pickles, bread, melted butter, salt pork, and all the old familiar and disagreeable odors and tastes of a farm table. The boys smelled of the stable and the whole scene was depressing and irritating. The mother scolded her boys harsh and petulant. Frazer shouted at the quarreling children with sudden rage. Manners were

exceedingly rude and primitive.

As I saw these boys bending over their bread and milk, eating with their knives I was again in the old days. Farmers have more to irritate them than any other men on the earth: pigs, cows, and horses are preserved as no earthly thing can be. I could see these worriments and irritations all about me on the large farm. The men all wore dirty and greasy clothing. Went to work in the morning without bathing. They were parched by the wind and burned by the sun. I found that an increase of stock had added to the burdens of the farmer, had made him a pack horse, kept him at home all the time with little or no opportunity for amusement.

None of the beauty of music came into his life. He lived for himself, away from his fellows, and all the little courtesies and delicacies of life were unknown to him. His crops were uncertain by reason of the chinch bugs, draught, or frost which always lay in wait for him.

In the mid-distance the river reflected dark, cold clouds. Cattle were on a point beyond. A boat floated like the petals of a lily. The indescribable splendor of the land, the velvety green of the flats. Yet anything greener than the hills could not be imagined, fresh and velvety beyond expression. The sky blue at the bottom, slated blue and gray above.

Frogs were croaking like Spanish castanets, calling from out the darkness as we flashed by. I went to sleep in my seat again, awakened occasionally by the screaming of the boys around a 4th of July bon-fire, whose light flamed in at the windows for a moment as

if with triumphant outcry. It was irresistible young America already celebrating old America independence.

A beautiful night full of the deepest and most impressive peace. Men's voices rung out in the air. Frogs called loudly, and with a gloomy and leisurely tone answering each other. The effect as of snoring.

His cows had to be milked, his horses fed, twice a day, and after the work was done he could not change his filthy clothing but must wear his sweaty and ill smelling shirt from one week's end to the other. At least that is what he does. If he gets on clean clothing on Sunday it is only for a few hours. The bondage seemed to me to be as vital as the clasp of death.

I heard a night hawk screaming as he swiftly fell, and evening came over the plain, starry and beautiful. The next day I went over and visited neighbor G. He had become lean and brown, even to his teeth, which were tobacco stained. Decay had set in upon him and would soon cover him. The home had a look of comfort; rag carpets on the floor, a careless profusion of one or two pictures was hung close to the ceiling, in fact all of the pictures were hung absurdly close to the ceiling. One or two little old frames contained faded and undecernable [sic] shadows of men and women each leaning wearily upon a mantle piece and gazing stonily into space. An organ and a small book case made up the furniture of the sitting room.

These ghastly chromos are every where, at neighbor Frazer's as well as at the Morrisons.

The barn was old and worn and badly eaten up by the horses,

thick with filth and exposed to the North winds. All that pertained to the barn was unlovely, but before it was a beautiful landscape, beautiful creek flowing slowly down the meadow. Around black birds piped and whistled and black birds near by returned the sounds. It was all so deeply and touchingly familiar to me. In that little pond I had gone swimming with Burton years before.

The sound was a delight, but the green of the great meadows was specially delightful to the eye. The green fields were dappled with golden green.

The furnishings of the home seemed to me to be pitiful. It was curious to see Mr. G. absolutely indifferent to his wife's sufferings. She was poor, old, humble and weazen, and had known nothing but toil for half a century. Her aches and pains had been going on for so many years that he listened to them without a sign of interest. In reality she should not have been allowed to do a particle of work, as a matter of fact she did it all.

The home seemed to me intolerably barren, no books no newspapers, and yet Mr. G. was one of the most intelligent men in the country. Ghastly old chromos on the wall framed in walnut hung tight against the ceiling and a worn rag carpet, battered organ, flies buzzing about, the sound of the wind outside in the trees; these things are associated in my mind. There was no beauty in the homestead, but it was a beauty imparted to it by the trees, winds and grasses. Nature adorns the humblest home. Going to meeting was one of the principal amusements of these people and this interest keeps the church going.

My old friend John I found had become a Methodist preacher and his parishioners were convinced that he was a great man. They were very amusing to me. John had married a daughter of a well to do man of a small town and was said to be very successful and very fortunate. He was getting very fat.

A beautiful July evening. Every day it had threatened rain, but it had blown by from time to time but there was scarcely a breath of air blowing. I sat out in the pasture listening to the sounds around me. Flies hummed all round, and the notes of a humming-bird far away; a robin chirped, and king birds and sparrows in the wind-brake kept up a cheerful chatter. A black bird broke forth at times into that unctuous wurree. The sounds from the farm yard completed the symphony. For a moment it made me forget the barrenness and monotony of this life. "How sweet it is to live in such peace," I said. Being filled with delight in nature, I allied myself to the black-bird and felt something of the same joy in nature. Fields, birds, and blossoms laden with bees, the sounding thrush, the falling disc of the sun fill me with a joy of living which was almost delirium.

In that moment I became the boy of the past, and for a moment all that I was or had attained in the East was forgotten. I had the impulse to let all things else go by. "Here is all that is best and most lasting in life," I said.

And yet I deceived myself. The next morning a thousand things claimed my thoughts. I ate my plain fare with corresponding jest, circumstances had changed. There are times when to live is great

joy, at other times beefsteak and coffee are worth more.

Neighbor B. I visited next. He seemed not to have changed much. He talked in a fairly deep voice, using remarkably good language. His adjectives were discriminating. The old stone house in which he lived, however, seemed less cheerful than ever. The windows were merely loop-holes.

In the old days, many years ago, he had built this with the intention of sometime making it a granary and moving into a fine new house. The new house had never been built and his poor thin wife emaciated almost to a skeleton was living in the same low stuffy rooms without hope of a change.

The oaken door, rude and rough as a pioneer's cabin, the faded color of Mrs. B.'s calico gown, caused by being washed innumerable number of times, the barren walls, the old, cheap and rickety furniture effected [sic] me most unpleasantly. The daughter had developed from an exceedingly plain girl to a still plainer spinster. They were washing and tried to excuse themselves, "It was wash day," etc. They were, however, not much concerned about me, as I was an old visitor and neighbor.

B. himself, wore a shirt, a pair of trousers, a pair of boots, and a hat, no more, no less. Regulation uniform of the farm. Ammonia was in the smell of his clothing. I get it every where among these stock farms. There is no escape from it. At the table one must eat with the smell of the barn-yard in his nostrils.

Mrs. B. moved about in ghastly, ghostly silence. She took practically little interest in me. Sat with a face like an Indian.



The girl was fat, slatternly, and sloppy. She wore a mustache on her lip.

B. himself, was handsome, kind, and with a twinkling eye.

We ate dinner in the little kitchen, hot as hell's front entry stone. In one corner a wash tub, in another a huge pitcher of milk, no napkins, no ceremony. They talked much on the prices of butter in Boston. The youngest girl put on a clean dress, in token of a certain maidenly pride. I did all I could to put them at ease by saying, "Oh, do not put on any frills for me, I know what wash day means."

The house appeared to me as graceless as a stone jug. Think of them living in that jail all these years. The old lady was nearing death's door. Her life, of what use? Another coral insect after a day of incessant toil, trying to add its little grain to the ledge.

It seemed to me if they realized their condition they would all die, they could not live.

In talking with Mr. J., the next door neighbor, I learned his feelings of the hopelessness of this life. He had deep eyes, a slow, full voice, and very attractive. "I am doing well enough now, but it is a dog's life. I am doing nothing but working like a nigger. We have no time to read, and then we are just rushed with our cattle."

Nothing can be more tragic than a soul awakening to its situation like this.

## Chapter 5.

Back in town again, I saw a great deal of E. C. The more I saw of her the more interested I became. She was always the same, yet never the same. There was something indescribable, something theatrical about her, as though she were acting a part with an air of alarm, not of personal violence but of disparagement from her husband which seemed to me he was not worth.

She seemed to fear her soul might be trampled upon by him, though she feared no physical harm. He appeared to me to be of dynamite liable at any moment to explode in cursing. Her graces were distinctive in a measure and anything given to alarm her added to her visage. The grace of the womanly poise of her head, the movement of her body were graceful and charming. Every woman of the town seemed cold and dull beside her. All except one. Miss K. made her appear unwholesome, tropical and sultry.

She made me think of a woman who has given herself to a man without duty, security and who fears the consequences of his rage. This fearing the uncertainties as regards her fate is the powerful element of the fascination in her. I felt admiration for her daring and courage.

One day as she called to her pet dove and it flew toward her and alighted on her head she made a wonderful picture as charming as anything that could be imagined of any country or state.

Her peculiarity of color was this, she did not blush but her color was ever present coming and going; now deepening at the temples now on the cheeks. Her color was always present warm and

radiant. She would be called a real blond.

Miss K. on the contrary is tall stately and divine. She almost seemed cold and with thought pure as snow with no suggestion of passion. She has no color, no artificial graces or wiles of any sort. Her stately walk, her colorless face, her great gray all denoted contentedness and free from impulse. She had grown to maturity since I knew her. She was a beautiful child and she had grown to be a beautiful woman. She dressed simply without any of the modish appliances of dress. Her gowns were usually plain white or wine color. She listened as I talked with closest attention, her arms folded, her face calm and colorless a faint smile touching her mouth. She was not a conversationalist but meditative in repose. She was not, however, gloomy, but reticent. She formed in her natural graces, and her pure beauty a perfect contrast to Mrs. C. whose splendid form and ripe though delicate color denoted a mature woman full of acquired graces.

It was strange then to see the dissimulation particularly of Mrs. C. It would appear that her husband was ruined with drink or that he was a villain to be more feared than a highwayman.

The home was really fine so far as it went. Small but comfortable. Everything seemed to be happily arranged, but beyond the atmosphere was to me sultry and life a strain. There was a tension about all she said or did which was like the drawing of a bow string. As I sat once in the parlor I heard her trying with musical voice cajoling him into good nature in the chamber above. He raved like a bear with a sore head, and although he had known me for many years

and my position was already a better one than his he took little pains to make things agreeable. I felt in talking with M. as well as with E. K. that it would be a great thing to interpret the thoughts of these young girls to get at what they actually knew of the world and the color which thought imparts to it. If I could do this I could write one of the greatest books. For such a book would be typical of the movements of a number of the people.

Milton Jennings. It might be that Milton coming in contact with a brilliant and powerful woman might lose his interest with Ilean, who meanwhile was becoming a dowdy little mother thick and slattern in dress. Ilean had never been a reader and her married life had taken away all her ambition.

#### Library Notes.

I was interested to see what was being read in town. I found that Mr. Howells was read by a few of the most intelligent people and that they believed in him thoroughly. Eggleston was read some, Miss Murphy a little. Cooper was immensely popular but E. P. Roe stood first. Pansy books next, Scott and Collins trailing behind. Literary intelligence therefore seemed to me to be at a low ebb. Only a few read the best books. It was incredible to me how little they really knew what was going on in the world.

The C\_\_\_\_\_s were much more intelligent and wide awake than most of the young girls of the town. They were like lily buds forth from the muck. To think they must grow old and withered that their beauty must go with the perfume of flowers and the petals of a rose. I saw it must be. Life is no stopping place for such as these, none what ever, none for any of us. Mrs. H. was sorrowful

and with sad voice told her history. Her beautiful sad eyes, beautiful and full of thought. Her fair head and general matronly form. A charming figure worthy of careful study. Her position was precarious. Teacher of art, a wife without a husband and without a child. Her life wrecked by one unworthy of her. The scene might be located in a studio. Cares coming and going. The contrast between their life and that of the young people of the town. Their fragile forms and lack of exercise.

Mrs. C. again. Her life peculiarly cold. Great profound grey eyes. Charming features, attractive mouth and lips, beautiful face. Stately though not tall figure. Graceful, original, and remarkable conversationalist. Well read, up to date. Knows just how to pose, is graceful in all her movements with a grace that is a bit theatrical and charming.

Talked with T, in which she spoke gloomily of her future. Like most women did not look to marriage for relief from their thoughts. Noted her lonely life upon the plain making her thoughtful and womanly. She was merely a child when I went away but is now a sombre young woman. Noted the old man and lady both weak and failing. Speak of them as last seen and as they now are. The old man was a mere wreck going rapidly into the grave. For what use? T. faithful to them and remained with them.

Milton had now completed the mid-summer term. He comes back to the farm helps hay and harvest. Write up the Fourth of July into Milton's life of that summer. Make use of [illegible] in that connection. He makes a devil of a splurge with a top buggy etc. Write

up Mr. B. as Ilean's father, his aversions, his fine voice, his handsome head, his smiles, nervous shaking of the head, his hat worn gracefully. Write in Uncle G. as a father and his life. The tobacco he had eaten for forty years. He looked as though he had been covered with the nicotine of his pipe.

Milton goes to town each Sunday to see Ilean. Draw a picture of him driving home in an autumn evening. Wild thoughts struggled in his mind between the actual Ilean and the impossible and passionately desired Lily. He wished to find a real, and a lovely girl, with emotions and aspirations for a high minded and beautiful woman. He did not like to let his high ideals go.

The love of love might be as enthralling as the love of a woman herself.

Work in how the farm life was sweetened by these weekly visits to Ilean, and that he really loved Ilean.

Courthouse, brick building, and hot as it could be. A wide hall ran through it with an uneven floor. Offices on each side of the hall. Milton sat in an office, as I walked in. A half dozen chairs invited me to take a seat back of the hall way. The trees outside moved gently, throwing down dapples of shade. An occasional call breaks the silence of the office. Crickets drop in the grass, and Milton, flung himself in a chair in the cold draught of the hall. He was most thoroughly at home there.

Note that the poem beginning, "A dream, I lie beneath the sky," was written at farmer G's. A beautiful evening. Notes of study. Study the court rooms, and lawyers, especially C. P. Study the town

as a whole. Get at the character of the people as compared with ten years ago. Look up pictures and ornaments. Study the library and see the books. Which are read and by whom. Look up the circulating library, meet as many of the citizens as possible, especially the young people. Study the Norwegians again, meet the editors.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Eldon Cleon Hill, was born in Putnam County, Indiana, May 3, 1906. After my graduation from the Greencastle, Indiana, High School, I attended DePauw University, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1927. For two years and a few months thereafter I was on the editorial staff of the Indianapolis News. In September, 1929, I entered the University of Wisconsin as a graduate scholar and received the degree of Master of Arts the following June. From 1930 to 1932 I was an instructor in the Department of English at Ohio Wesleyan University. In 1932-33 I carried forward my graduate study in the Department of English at The Ohio State University. From 1933 to 1937 I taught at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois. In 1937-38, as the University Fellow in English at The Ohio State University, I did my third year of post-graduate work. At present I am an assistant professor of English at Miami University.